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The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

FORMERLY THE ALTERNATIVE: AN AMERICAN SPECTATOR



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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• September was a very sad month for those merry coves who have experienced such sweet and carbonated *bilaritas* during the Presidency of Jimmy Carter and his Dogpatch Mafia. After the thirteen-day Camp David Summit ended successfully, a delirious national press set out to canonize the Wonderboy, and even our merry coves find it difficult to laugh and whistle at a saint. Was it to end like this? Was the most amusing Presidency in modern times to end with organ accompaniment? Had a pig's ear suddenly been transformed into what the redoubtable *Newsweek* called "a formidable international horse-trader"? Apparently the sages at the National Press Club and at Sans Souci think so, yet the facts gainsay them.

• For the Camp David agreements, the world is indebted not to the Wonderboy's genius but to his doltishness and possibly to his amnesia, proving once again that stupidity has its constructive purposes. Before Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat ever arrived in the United States they had agreed to the essentials of the Camp David agreements, motivated as they were by that vision of horror Jimmy had created over a year before when he flabbergasted them with his plan for reconvening the Geneva Conference with the Russians, the PLO, and every other bomb-throwing statesman available for the occasion. Almost instantly Mr. Sadat was on a plane to Tel Aviv, and during subsequent months Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat have through halting and mysterious intermediary means pursued their own self-interest toward a separate bilateral peace. Jimmy's plan for a Middle East peace was, if memory serves us, for a comprehensive settlement. The Camp David accords represent a *de facto* repudiation of him and an endorsement of Mr. Henry Kissinger's step-by-step approach. Actually the chelonian shadow of Dr. Kissinger can be seen all over the Camp David agreements. Jimmy's achievement was: a) to file away his own disastrous peace plan, b) to keep Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat at work on the final details of the accords, and c) to keep his Yahoos quiet for thirteen days. No small achievement that, but for now the merry coves ought to cheer up. There may soon be peace between Egyptians and Israelis, and the Dogpatch Mafia will not remain inert for long.

• That chaplain to Queen Elizabeth II who was juggled at the Wimbledon tennis match for lifting the skirt of a 14-year-old girl comforted local magistrates on September 12 when he explained that he was only doing "finger exercises." The Venerable John Ross Youens, 63, did not deny that he had raised the girl's skirt four times, exposing four to six inches of her femur, but he added that ever since his operation for Dupuytren's Contracture he has had "to undergo almost automatic physiotherapy to get the fingers straight." An electric washing machine went berserk in the laundry room of a Gary, Indiana, housewife, murdering the lady's dog and causing extensive damage to a nearby dryer. According to the lady, Mrs. Fiala Jackson, the dog, a trained watchdog, had apparently recognized the washing machine as an intruder, and in trying to scare it off was cornered and battered to death.

• Mr. Keith Moon, the frenzied drummer of

the illustrious rock group The Who, died of the traditional drug overdose. The Canadian educational establishment was sent into depression by news that a trained chicken at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto was taking on all comers at tic-tac-toe and winning. Yet the news caused antivivisectionists to rejoice, and vegetarians all over the western hemisphere will be using the chicken's inspiring story in their promotional brochures. In Colorado Springs, Colorado, the once promising military career of Staff Sgt. Little B. (Bill) Douglas is in ruins after he appeared in a mess hall wearing a black gown, high heels, and a wig. Staff Sgt. Douglas is a modern homosexual.

• September saw mounting evidence of what some social scientists see as a distressing trend in America's political culture. On September 13 the House Ethics Committee rendered its judgment that the Rt. Hon. Joshua Eilberg transgressed House rules and broke federal criminal law when his law bordello slipped more than \$100,000 to him while it was aiding a Philadelphia hospital's lunge for federal funds. On September 27 the committee recommended that the House censure the Rt. Hon. Edward R. Roybal and reprimand the Rt. Hon. Charles H. Wilson for lack of caution. The same House committee began investigations into the comparative blatancy of the Rt. Hon. Edward J. Patten, and the Rt. Hon. Charles C. Diggs' trial began on September 26. Mr. Diggs allegedly shook down his own staff members for kickbacks amounting to more than 100 three-piece suits, three Cadillacs, and 300 dinners at Le Bagatelle. On September 5 a federal grand jury indicted former Representative Frank M. Clark on thirteen counts of mail fraud, perjury, and income tax evasion, and on the following day the Rt. Hon. Daniel Flood was indicted by another hard-pressed federal grand jury on three counts of honeyfogling. The trend seems clear: The crime rate among past and present U.S. congressmen has surpassed that of unemployed male teenagers, heretofore the most crime-prone of our citizenry!

• In September the Los Angeles school district began one of the most intricate and massive forced busing ever conceived by the brain of mortal man. It is a scheme made all the more interesting and colorful by the fact that this district, the second largest in the Great Republic, contains not only blacks and whites but also a sizeable number of browns, some yellows, and an elegant tint of reds, thus allowing constructive racialists to give vast play to their stupefying imaginations: *Perhaps two browns, three blacks, 4 yellows, and a gypsy to every 2.6 whites, so long as those whites have no Mediterranean or Semitic blood. In the event that Mediterranean or Semitic traces appear in a student's genealogy he will be known as a "gray" or "grey." Those students whose maternal and paternal grandparents are of proven Scandinavian blood will be considered 35 percent more white than the standard white. All controversies will be settled according to the New Orleans race laws of 1843—after all, the past does have its uses.* A singularly interesting innovation in constructive racialism was introduced by Principal Harold Kuhn of the Dearborn Elementary School of Northridge, Califor-

nia. As reported in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Commandant Kuhn has ordered "tight control" over all pupils, particularly during lunch time and recess when free association amongst the children could undermine all of Dearborn Elementary's matutinal efforts at inculcating the goose step. According to the Commandant—who himself was not terribly forthcoming when we inquired as to the number of blacks, browns, and yellows with whom he plays—"We're trying to avoid resegregation on the playground. Otherwise the whole point of busing is defeated." Such are the blessings of liberty visited upon the children of greater Los Angeles by our benevolent, enlightened, and democratic polity.

• The month saw other promising developments in the drive to make America a chaste and tidy realm of perfect justice. From the great state of Connecticut comes Mr. Barry S. Zitser to pull down one more stone in the ghastly edifice of discrimination, which we Americans have adored all these years even as the dispossessed of the land groan and pray that their burden be lifted. In this case we speak of those forgotten souls whose names begin with X and Y and Z. Mr. Zitser is one of the first Americans to dare to speak out against institutionalized alphabetism, the flagitious system whereby those whose names start with letters to the fore of the alphabet prosper while those with names toward the aft languish. As consumer counsel for the state of Connecticut, Mr. Zitser has lodged an official complaint against the Southern New England Telephone Company's hoary practice of listing the names of firms and individuals alphabetically in its yellow pages. Better that the names appear randomly, and better still that the telephone directories of Connecticut publish yellow pages with neither beginnings nor ends. Perhaps a telephone directory with only a middle—is that not what Thomas Jefferson really had in mind?

• Yet if America's forward-lookers are breaking new ground in the struggle for constructive racialism and an end to institutionalized alphabetism, there have been setbacks. This year's presidential proclamation of Leif Ericson Day referred to Mr. Ericson and his colleagues as "brave men battling fearful odds," completely obliterating the genuine progress in social justice that was made last year when our President's proclamation referred to the late Mr. Ericson as "that courageous Norseperson." Furthermore, those Americans who hate and fear the environment received an unexpected boost when it was reported that North Carolina's chief polluter is its pine forests. According to consultants employed by the state, North Carolina will not be able to conform to federal ozone standards until enormous numbers of pines are sacrificed. And a West Seattle, Washington, man has complained to police that his ex-wife has recently terrorized him with 242 obscene telephone calls, including 92 within a six-hour period. A sad story indeed, but sadder still is the refusal of the West Seattle police to divulge the lady's name. There now appears almost no way for us to slip her our telephone number.

• Finally, with its September 23 number the *Spectator* of London is 150 years old and full of life. Happy Days!

—RET

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The American Spectator was founded in 1924 by George Nathan and Truman Newberry over a cheap domestic ale in McSorley's Old Ale House. In 1967 the Saturday Evening Club took it over, rechristening it The Alternative: An American Spectator; but by November 1977 the word "alternative" had acquired such an esoteric fragrance that in order to discourage unsolicited manuscripts from florists, beauticians, and other creative types the Club reverted to the magazine's original name. The American Spectator is now published monthly at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Second class postage paid at Bloomington, Indiana, and additional mailing offices.

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Jimmy: Midway in the Revels

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

The saga began on January 20, 1977, the date on which Jimmy was inaugurated 39th President. His inaugural address, intoned in his famous *andante con ping pong* cadence, was an arrestingly straightforward and simple-witted oration that should have answered immediately and forever his campaign's famed rhetorical question: "Why Not The Best?" Why not indeed! The Wonderboy had entered the Presidency with exactly six years' experience in Georgia state government behind him. When he was inaugurated, the current edition of *Who's Who* still listed his profession as "farmer and warehouseman." Thirteen days after this soporific monologue he delivered his first "Fireside Chat," the substantive highlight of which was his request that citizens restrain themselves from sending him "gifts." About that time there appeared the first pictures of our President tripping Ford-like in front of the White House. It was an impressive beginning, but for the first few months not many caught on. Except for the hijinks of the Rev. Young and the scalping of one or two of Jimmy's more maladroit appointments, Washington remained in a protracted and blissful coma.

This was to be expected. Our sudden release from the Ford fascism was bound to gladden many a Washington heart, and a temporary relaxation in our indigenous freedom fighters' eternal vigilance was only natural. More importantly, however, it is in the early months of an administration that the President presents his policies and that the pundits and pols politely scrutinize them. It is a quiet time. In Mr. Carter's case, it was an especially quiet time, for he did not seem to have many policies or even many ideas about policies. What policies he did have amounted to sheer tedium—the Great Society as understood by Dinah Shore, and implemented by George McGovern with assistance from the Plains, Georgia, Rotary. Harding drunk was better equipped for the Presidency than Jimmy, though here it ought to be recorded that when the voice of the people was heard in 1976, the voice was faint: 27.5 percent of the people said Jimmy, 26 percent said Jerry, and a whopping 46.5 percent said yecch. So the pundits remained quiescent, but by autumn the average American began to shift in his seat. Soon even the pundits began to stir. Andy Young, Bert Lance, Rosalynn, Amy, Miss Lillian. Zounds!

It was in early November 1977, not yet a year into the Populist Era, that the President's coterie of yokels was roused from

reveries on the perfect *filet de catfish* by the shouts of the pollsters. Jimmy's popularity had mysteriously evaporated. Holy Shee-it! At the White House Ham and Jody, our President's dungareed aides, hurriedly removed their socks from the radiator, thrust their hooves into their clodhoppers, and with shirttails flapping galloped into the Oval Office. The Yankees had done woke up! Congress was in mutiny! The conservatives were mad and the liberals were madder. Even the Washington press corps no longer saw the charm of having a pack of Snopeses listening to Scheherazade in the White House's West Wing.

Publisher's Note: Attorneys, myopes, and insomniacs have already let out a yell, having read in our masthead's fine print that *The American Spectator* is now a fully monthly magazine. In the past we were, according to the fine print, "published monthly except July and September." This allowed the editorial staff time to sunbathe and otherwise carry on after the manner of the modern intellectual, but our business department grew anxious. The summer slowdown also caused our subscribers some alarm, and doubtless there were moments of depression, perhaps even instances of weight gain and hives. So now we're a fully monthly magazine. Our subscription price is \$12 for twelve issues, rather than \$10 for ten issues. Current subscriptions will not be affected by this change—if you had 3 or 11 or 32 issues remaining in your subscription before the change, you'll still get 3 or 11 or 32 issues.

The yokels' holiday in the big city was over. Something stupendous needed to be done or it was back to the all-night Standard station. Fortunately for the boys, Jimmy had hired a Yankee pollster, Patrick Caddell, who had already devised a political strategy memorandum to assure Jimmy's victory in 1980. We know this because the astonishing document was leaked to the *New York Times*. According to Caddell, "Too many good people have been beaten because they tried to substitute substance for style." Of course, Jimmy was in no danger of perishing from a superabundance of substance, and when Ham and Jody heard of Caddell's prescription for presidential greatness they came alive with enthusiasm. Very simply, Caddell prescribed a "continuing political campaign." That day there resounded

from the Oval Office many hot damns and taaarnations. It was a day for jubilation. The boys would not return home in 1980! The people could be hornsoggled once again! During the next month our President showed the old fire of campaign '76. First he went aridin' through the slums of South Bronx to condole with the victims of Wall Street. Then he laced up his own clodhoppers, charged onto the White House lawn, and put on the feed bag with "the Peanut Brigade," five hundred credulous Georgians who had staffed his 1976 campaign and with whom he would occasionally visit to illustrate some obscure point in the populist whim-wham. "These are my closest friends in all the world," he sighed, and the press quoted him. "We're part of the same family," he purred. "I'm a red-neck just like you." A certain breed of low-grade American seems to fall for this drivel, and Jimmy and the boys knew it. When in trouble he would mix such sentimental flummeries with outraged denunciations of lawyers, doctors, businessmen, automobile mechanics, almost anyone who produced anything, almost anyone footing the bill for our government's good works. At times his philippics would be so violent that they would astonish even the Gucci Bolsheviks of Georgetown.

But brazen flattery, unctuous maundering, and objurgations of the tax-paying public availed him naught. Moreover, the polls continued to sink him. In a fever he began travelling to foreign lands, whether invited or not. In late December of 1977 he went on a historic nine-day, seven-nation tour that was as comic as it was useless. In Poland his arrival speech will be remembered as the most hilarious ever delivered by an American President on foreign soil. Aided by a spectacularly inept translator, Jimmy gravely notified an assemblage of shocked Polish dignitaries that he had abandoned America forever. Apropos of human rights, he assured the Poles that he understood all the sexual yearnings of the Polish people. Chortles commenced, yet onward he lunged, piling up malapropism atop malapropism. Distractedly he would look up from his prepared text and discover his audience convulsed in laughter, yet on he would trudge, amusing them all the more and assuring his place as the most thundering hind ever to bloviate in the land of the kielbasa. Did he ever ask any of his aides what the guffawing was all about? Who knows, and who knows how many of his aides would know. On his right stood Jordan and to his left stood Powell, both loyally shouldering his perplexity, at least

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Stephen Miller

New York Jew: A Tale Distorted

In the third volume of his autobiography, Alfred Kazin grotesquely misrepresents the character of Lionel Trilling, rehearses the orthodoxy of anti-anti-Communism, and reduces Jewish history and culture to a narrow ethnic mystique.

“The reciprocal civility of authors,” Samuel Johnson said, “is one of the most risible scenes in the farce of life.” A writer who was at the center of literary life in London for about 40 years in the mid-eighteenth century, Johnson well knew how writers are wracked more than most people with the pains of envy, jealousy, and resentment. It comes as no surprise that Alfred Kazin’s *New York Jew*,* a memoir of life among writers and intellectuals in New York during the past 30 years, shows up some authors for the vain, petty, and mean-spirited souls they often are—personal qualities that say nothing, of course, about the quality of their work. It comes as some surprise, though, that a few weeks after the book was reviewed favorably in the *New York Times Book Review*, 19 distinguished intellectuals objected—in a letter to the editor of the book review—to what they described as Kazin’s “grotesque misrepresentation” of Lionel Trilling, the well-known literary and cultural critic who died several years ago.

Lionel Trilling is one of the central figures in Kazin’s book, which is the third volume of an autobiographical trilogy that includes *A Walker in the City* and *Starting Out in the Thirties*. Dense with precise observations of the urban landscape and rich in fascinating sketches of famous writers, *New York Jew* is a tightly-woven and elegantly-written work of autobiographical art. Yet it is also a disturbing, misleading, and irritating book. And these qualities are especially apparent in Kazin’s portrait of Trilling.

The portrait is an ambivalent one. When Trilling first appears on Kazin’s stage, he is praised as a “master of distinctions,” someone with an extraordinarily subtle and fine mind. But it was a mind so fine, Kazin soon implies, that no clearcut political or cultural position could violate it. According to Kazin, Trilling was a careerist, an opportunist who always worried about his reputation. “He seemed,” Kazin says, “intent on not diminishing his career by a single word.” The initial bow of respect is followed by a slap in the face. “No one,” Kazin says, “could have been more discerning, and less involved.”

Kazin confesses that he was once invited to dinner at the home of Lionel Trilling and his wife, Diana Trilling, and that he was never invited back. Should we dismiss Kazin’s portrait of Trilling as mere petulance on Kazin’s part for having been, in effect, snubbed by the Trillings? Or should we dismiss it as resentment on Kazin’s part for not having received quite as many literary honors as Trilling received? Such speculations, I think, should be indulged in only by those who knew Trilling and Kazin—only by those who are capable of entering into an argument about Trilling’s character. The disinterested outsider can only examine

the general ideas that go into the making of the portrait. And they are worthy of discussion, for they touch upon a question that has been at the center of American intellectual life since the end of World War II.

The question is a two-fold one: What were the appropriate responses to the evils of Communism and Nazism? Throughout *New York Jew*, Kazin implies that on both issues—if we can call Nazism an issue—Trilling’s response failed to pass the test of adequacy whereas his own passed with flying colors.

The question of an appropriate response to Communism requires some historical elaboration. After the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, most American intellectuals broke completely with the Communists, the exception being Lillian Hellman and a band of Hollywood screenwriters who devoutly worshipped the Soviet Union until the late forties and early fifties. The question for most intellectuals was not whether one should be for Communism but how one should be against it, and the debaters sorted themselves out into two distinct groups: the anti-Communists and the anti-anti-Communists. Although such crude terms don’t do justice to the nuanced political positions of many, they have a certain appropriateness since they were employed by those participating in the debate.

The anti-anti-Communists considered it reprehensible to dwell on the evils of Communism because they thought that by doing so one played into the hands of reactionary forces. To some extent they were right. Some anti-Communists were out-and-out reactionaries who were quick to label any liberal idea as Communist-inspired; and some, like Senator Joseph McCarthy, were unscrupulous exploiters of populist paranoia about foreign ideologies. Finally, some were sincere ex-radicals who became tediously obsessive in their preoccupation with the spread of Communism; that was all they could think or write about. But there were other intellectuals who deplored the excesses of the radical right and yet at the same time recognized that it was perfectly legitimate to worry about Soviet expansion under the banner of Communism, which they saw as a threat to America’s allies and ultimately to the United States itself. The Cold War, they realized, was not an American invention—not an American fit of self-induced madness. Although American diplomacy may have needlessly exacerbated tensions at times, the Soviet Union was a power to be feared and indeed to be preoccupied with. Among this latter group, whom we might call the sober anti-Communists, was Lionel Trilling, though it should be said that he was less vocal about these matters than other more political writers such as Daniel Bell, Irving Kristol, Sidney Hook, and Diana Trilling. Kazin, as one might suspect, was on the other side; he considered himself an anti-anti-Communist.

* Alfred A. Knopf; \$10.95.

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One would think that a writer bent on describing the shape of intellectual life in New York after the war would offer a reasonably serious discussion of the relative merits of both positions, but Kazin does no such thing. He simply has no use for the sober anti-Communists, and he damns them in several ways. For one thing, he does not believe they were sober. About Diana Trilling, for example, he has the following to say: "She was a dogged woman and looked it, with a passion for polemic against all possible dupes of the Soviet Union that in the McCarthy era and the heyday of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom was to make her the scourge of all mistaken ill-thinking 'anti-anti-Communists.'" Mentioned in the same breath as McCarthy, Diana Trilling is also caricatured as the political equivalent of a woman's temperance crusader, her anti-Communism the self-righteous passion of someone whose favorite literary genre, according to Kazin, "seemed to be the letter to the editor."

According to Kazin, Lionel Trilling's anti-Communism was a less passionate affair; it was, rather, the posture of a trimmer. Trilling, Kazin implies, embraced anti-Communism because it was a safe position, one in tune with the political orthodoxy of the fifties. Trilling was thus one in spirit with the writers who worked with Kazin on the staff of *Time* magazine, about whom he says: "How helpful to some careers it became to say so"—to say, that is, how much one opposed Communism. Throughout the book Kazin makes fun of Trilling's favorite terms of discourse—society, culture, the educated classes—implying that these genteel phrases enabled Trilling to avoid confronting the sordid realities of American power during the Cold War era. Kazin was wiser, for he knew that "government ruled, not 'Society.'"

Kazin's speculations about Trilling's motives might be right if preaching anti-Communism truly helped one's career in the literary and intellectual world. But in the New York intellectual and academic circles in which Trilling and Kazin moved anti-anti-Communism was orthodoxy. Anti-Communism may have played well in Peoria—and thus may have helped the careers of some journalists and many politicians—but it bombed in New York, where Whittaker Chambers, who preached anti-Communism in the pages of *Time*, was regarded with a loathing usually reserved for the likes of a Hitler. Just as Senator McCarthy labelled all liberals crypto-Communists, so many anti-anti-Communists thought all anti-Communists were crypto-McCarthyites. Kazin himself calls Irving Kristol a "professional rightist," a phrase that belongs to the arsenal of Stalinist vituperation. One wonders why he refrains from calling Lionel Trilling a "bourgeois deviationist." To suggest the hold Kazin's vision of the Cold War years still has on many intellectuals, one need only quote from a recent article on Lionel Trilling in *Salmagundi*, a leading literary journal, where the writer lumps all anti-Communists—sober or not—together, and speaks of the "headlong flights" of writers like James Burnham, Sidney Hook, Irving Kristol, Whittaker Chambers, John Dos Passos, and Arthur Koestler "from one political extreme to the other" (emphasis mine), as if this very mixed bag of writers espoused a politics that was the mirror image of Stalinism! The orthodoxy of anti-anti-Communism still reigns in intellectual circles, and all those who think differently are considered hysterical crusaders or opportunistic careerists.

Kazin assumes that anti-anti-Communism was the only enlightened, responsible, and courageous position that one could take during the Cold War era. Lionel Trilling thought otherwise. In an introduction to the re-issue of his novel, *The Middle of the Journey*, Trilling says that the very phrase anti-anti-Communism "tells us how much authority Stalinist Communism still had for the intellectual class." Anti-anti-Communism, Trilling continues, "was not quite so neutral a position as at first it might seem to have been: it said that although, for the moment at least, one need not be actually for [emphasis Trilling's] Communism, one was morally compromised, turned toward evil and away from good, if one was against it." One of the consequences of anti-anti-Communism is that it has led to a serious exaggeration and distortion of the evils of the McCarthy era. Kazin says of this period that "the demand for orthodoxy suffocated me." In what way, one wants to know? Could he not get published? Was he persecuted by

politicians, hounded out of a job? Kazin also calls a congressman on the House Committee on Un-American Activities "the good American Vishinsky." If this is a joke, it is in bad taste, since to compare the harassment and mild persecution of several thousand Americans with the murder of millions of innocent Russians (Vishinsky was the chief prosecutor of Stalin's purge trials) is absurd. Although Kazin was never an apologist for the Soviet Union and was never as foolish about the Soviet Union as Lillian Hellman, his autobiography perpetuates the legend of scoundrel time that Hellman created in her autobiography. Whatever we think of Kazin's portrait of Trilling, his picture of intellectual life during the McCarthy era surely qualifies as a grotesque misrepresentation.

II

What constituted an appropriate response to Nazism? An idle question, one would think, since there were no anti-anti-Nazis; there were only anti-Nazis, pure and simple. In any case, Kazin's response is clear: The matter—or, rather, the awesome fact—of Nazism is for him "the nightmare that would bring everything else into question; that will haunt me to my last breath." As is obvious from the book's title, Kazin makes much of his sense of himself as a Jew, and this self-consciousness is continually related to his preoccupation with the Nazis' war against the Jews. The nightmare of Nazism is the thematic note of the book, one that Kazin sounds throughout.

According to Kazin, Lionel Trilling did not have such nightmares—or, at least, he never alluded to them, never confronted the fact of Nazism in his writings. Yet he too, like Kazin, was the son of poor Jewish immigrants; and therefore the nightmare of Nazism, Kazin implies, *should* have haunted him. Trilling turned his back on this question because, as Kazin says twice in the course of three pages, all his life Trilling defended himself from the many things he had left behind. Although Trilling did not deny his Jewish background, he took great pains to distance himself from Jewish manners and Jewish questions. As Kazin says: "I had never encountered a Jewish intellectual so conscious of social position, so full of adopted finery in his conversation." Because Trilling was eager to become a respected and respectable cultural critic, he could not afford to be a New York Jew; and Kazin, an intellectual who had not lost touch with his Jewish past, made him uncomfortable. "For Trilling," Kazin says, "I would always be 'too Jewish,' too full of my lower-class experience." Trilling, Kazin suggests, carefully avoided the question of Nazism because it would not help his literary career to dwell on subjects that might call attention to his Jewish origins. Trilling's response to Nazism was inadequate because there simply was no response.

Such is Kazin's case against Trilling on this matter, a case developed by fits and starts, at times presented explicitly, at times offered in the muffled voice of innuendo. Let us assume that Kazin is right and that Trilling, as Robert Alter put it, adopted "the manner of a facsimile WASP." No doubt those who attempt to assume a way of life far removed from their origins may appear ludicrous and pathetic, but Kazin implies that acting in this way constitutes a kind of ethnic dishonesty, a betrayal of one's background. The son of a Jewish tailor, he implies, has no right to speak the way Trilling did. Kazin also assumes that Jewish writers are obligated to wrestle with their Jewishness directly, not obliquely, and so he condemns Trilling for evading the subject. Both assumptions betray a rigid and self-righteous kind of cultural determinism.

Perhaps Nazism did haunt Trilling as it haunted Kazin, but he chose not to let it determine what he would write about. Yet perhaps Nazism did not haunt him—did not, that is, haunt him more than the other nightmares of the twentieth century. The path to one's origins is not a straight and narrow one. Just as some Armenians (or Poles, or Ukrainians, or blacks, or countless other persecuted ethnic and racial groups) will be more preoccupied with their distinctive history and distinctive miseries than others, so some Jews will choose the path of a Kazin, some the path of a Trilling—if, indeed, Trilling's path is correctly charted by Kazin.

To assign vulgar motives to those who take the path of a Trilling smacks of ethnic mystique.

Unfortunately, *New York Jew* is shot through with ethnic mystique. I say this not to unmask Kazin's Jewishness as a literary pose—and not, certainly, to question the sincerity of Kazin's deep anguish about the fate of the Jews under the Nazis. I say it to point out that the emotional and intellectual configuration of Kazin's Jewishness is a very contemporary phenomenon, resembling the mystique peddled by other contemporary writers who dwell on their blackness, womanness, Irishness, etc. This sensibility is commonplace among those who have, in some measure, become deracinated—have lost their cultural moorings and are floating free. Ill at ease in their isolated freedom, they continually conjure up a sense of community that is based upon their anguished and outraged awareness of the unique nature of their people's sufferings.

Such a mystique usually has little to do with the felt life of a particular cultural or religious tradition. Kazin, in fact, makes it quite clear that he wanted to escape the weight of Jewish traditions—that it was his early ambition to move in a "world of power in which my own people had moved about as strangers." Kazin's sense of Jewishness, Robert Alter has said, is "peculiarly disembodied." For Kazin, being Jewish means belonging to a community composed of suffering outsiders; it does not mean subscribing to a distinctive body of customs, ceremonies, and thought.

The guiding light of this disembodied Jewishness is Franz Kafka, whom Kazin calls "our brother" and "our great and beautiful novelist, prophet, misfit"—a prophet because his works anticipated the Holocaust. Kafka earns the right to be labelled with an "our" because for Kazin he is *the* Jewish writer, his imagination dominated by a distinctively Jewish sense of guilt and suffering. It was Kafka who said that "not the murderer but the victim is guilty," and Kazin says that the Jews "were just a people *accused* [emphasis Kazin's], as of old; a people whose only mission was to feel guilty." By making Kafka serve as the archetype of the Jewish imagination, and thus especially capable of being appreciated and understood by Jewish readers, Kazin does violence to the unique literary characteristics of Kafka's work that make it moving and chilling to many readers, whatever their ethnic background. Moreover, by writing about Kafka in this way, Kazin indulges in a kind of ethnic obscurantism, for there is no such thing as a distinctively Jewish imagination—a point that should be apparent to anyone who has read Saul Bellow, Isaac Babel, Isaac Singer, Philip Roth, and a host of other Jewish writers.

Perhaps Kazin can so confidently appropriate Kafka in this way because Kazin himself has such a limited notion of Jewishness—equating it with suffering and guilt. He reduces Jewish history and Jewish culture to a melodramatic, one-dimensional lamentation about the miseries of a people who are misfits, outsiders. The Jews, he says, have suffered—and, presumably, will continue to suffer—because "in a world increasingly conceived as the struggle of 'modern' revolutionary forces, the Jews seemed to be entirely a people of the past, living in the past." This generalization is simply untrue; the least thought about the matter should have made Kazin realize that the Jews are not the only people rooted in the past. Kazin, however, needs the notion of Jewish uniqueness in order to link the suffering the Jews underwent at the hands of

the Nazis with the suffering he—a New York Jew—underwent in his several marriages. "We fought," he says of one such marriage, "like the cornered Jews we were...." Kazin knows how terrible the final solution was, but surely the notion of the eternally suffering Jew makes it easy to lose sight of the uniqueness of the Nazis' treatment of the Jews. During the first five years of the forties, European Jews truly were cornered.

Kazin criticizes Trilling for defending himself from the many things he had left behind—in particular, his Jewish origins. But Kazin has also left his Jewish past, and the Jewish mystique that he rehearses in this autobiography is also a defense of sorts, a way of being Jewish without bearing the weight of Jewish traditions. Kazin is not so much in touch with his Jewish past as haunted by that aspect of it which speaks only of suffering. Learning about the Jews at Belsen who greeted their liberators by reciting the most important Hebrew prayer, Kazin says: "Weeping in the rain, I said it with them. For a moment I was home." But Kazin is "home" only for a moment, only when he confronts the horrors of the concentration camps. It would be pointless and heartless to ask whether this is an appropriate response to Nazism, but it is a dis-

turbing and—in some ways—a complacent response, for Kazin's Jewishness quickens into life only when he thinks of the Nazis and his marital ordeals. The land of Kazin's Jewish mystique is a uniform vale of tears, a land peopled only with "obsessed, grieving Jews." In this sense, we might call Kazin's Jewish mystique a misrepresentation of sorts—a simplification and a distortion of the complex world of Jewish history and Jewish culture.

To fathom the motives that led to this misrepresentation is impossible, but Lionel Trilling's essay, "The Fate of Pleasure," provides an intelligent gloss on the emotional and intellectual strategies at work in *New York Jew*. In that essay, Trilling argues that "our high culture invites us to transfer our energies from the bourgeois competition to the spiritual competition." Or, to put it in less abstract terms, intellectuals have some need to show to others not how rich or successful or clever they are, but how spiritually

intense they are—how much they are capable of suffering, anguish, and rage. In *New York Jew*, Kazin seems to be engaged in a spiritual competition both with Trilling—implying that Trilling was less moved by the nightmare of Nazism than he was—and with himself; by dwelling on the fatality of his Jewishness, he seems to be reassuring himself that, as Trilling put it in his essay, "I have more life in me than I have."

New York Jew, however, is not all in this vein. At times Kazin forgets that he is a cornered Jew and gives us affecting portraits of several American writers as well as luminous descriptions of the many walks he has taken in Paris, London, Rome, and New York. These descriptions of the urban landscape are very much in the American grain, recalling the poetry of Walt Whitman and Hart Crane, and they possess an energy and dazzle that Trilling's grave "English" prose never attained. In fact, we may say that Kazin, unlike Trilling, is very much an American writer, both in his celebrations of walking in the city and in his spiritual aggrandizement—his championing of the lacerated self. Perhaps the Trillings snubbed Kazin—if, indeed, they did snub him—not because they disliked his politics or were uncomfortable with his Jewishness but because they found him too intensely American. Perhaps, to use a contemporary idiom that seems especially appropriate, they thought that he came on too strong. □



W. Scott Thompson

The Soviets' African Waltz

A knack for imaginative and effective leadership is what the Soviets prize most in their African allies. In this respect, Colonel Haile Mengistu Meriam of Ethiopia—who in 1977 walked into a cabinet meeting and shot all of his erstwhile colleagues—is a model ruler.

It was in the center of Accra, 1966, just a few days after Ghana's armed forces had overthrown the "Osagyefo" (Redeemer) Kwame Nkrumah. I watched with mild amusement as busload after busload of expelled Russians headed for the airport, now that the new men in charge had decided to end Ghana's growing dependence on Moscow. Crowds of Ghanaians jeered at the Russians, who had won no more points for good manners or style here than elsewhere. "They crowd market and buy old missionary clothes from America," an elderly matriarch mumbled at me. "No good person buy used clothes. Ghanaians dress fashionable." (Had she realized how much better these cast-offs from Kansas were than what was available in Kiev or Smolensk she might have been more charitable.) Still young and naive, I turned to a European diplomat-friend, who had been around Africa a long time, and suggested that perhaps this signalled the end for Russia in Africa. Africans seemed to be coming to their senses after their early flirtations with the Soviets after independence; and perhaps the overthrow of Nkrumah's tyranny promised a return to more congenial and more democratic values.*

"The Russians will be back," my friend said. "Maybe not to Ghana, but wherever there is chaos—and of that there will be plenty. The thin veneer of Western institutions is crumbling very quickly in Africa today. New, even less sophisticated leaderships will need new guidelines for governance, of which nothing is more serviceable than Lenin's green light to any kind of tactic for sustaining power.

"And the Russians will be ready to come back. Their leaders are *hommes sérieux*. They will sit down and analyze their mistakes here—and *Pravda* won't have to mention this monumental humiliation. They will come back wherever there is the opportunity, until they have got control, from a strategic point of view, of the whole continent with its absolutely indispensable mineral wealth."

Following their expulsion, the Russians did indeed convene conferences and study groups to examine their failings. Unlike the process of self-flagellation that took hold in the United States after Vietnam, this was undertaken from the rather sensible point of view: "How do we prevent imperialism from outmaneuvering us next time?" What the Soviets' published lessons reflect is their realization that great dangers lay in involving themselves too deeply with a state whose ruling party was not "tied deeply to the masses" (to use that very special euphemism for ironclad control), or whose leadership was not in some way critically dependent on Soviet support. That the Soviets had overlooked this in the case of Ghana was no doubt due in part to their earlier success in making an ally of Cuba. Khrushchev had concluded that he could easily find more Cubas, and more Castros, in Africa. His successors, after the loss of Ghana, were more sensitive to the special circum-

stances of the Cuban situation: its unique geographical position and hence its great dependence for survival on Soviet support.

At the same time, the post-Khrushchev leadership was determined to narrow the gap in diplomatic clout between itself and America. What emerged in the way of a policy toward Africa was at once a new flexibility at the purely diplomatic level and a far stricter ideological standard for full engagement. In other words, reap what benefits are available from any state that really matters whatever its ideology; but if you are going to get deeply involved, make sure that you can control the situation insofar as it affects Soviet interests. That meant making sure there was a Leninist mentality present in the leadership and lots of imported Communist advisers in the cadre.

In the intervening years, the Soviets ceased to worry excessively—if at all—about small African states, except where strategic advantage lay (as with Somalia and Guinea, whose leaders allowed the Soviets to build base facilities). Thus, instead of fretting over the survival of a regime like little Mali's, or coining new categories of socialist standing so as to include its party in the Communist pantheon, they cultivated big states that mattered.

The new policy first paid off with the Nigerian civil war. Hardly any state in Africa had been so reviled in Soviet literature under Khrushchev in the 1960s, but when civil war broke out in 1967, the Soviets filled up the anti-insurgents' arsenals. Since the end of that war in early 1970, the Soviets have enjoyed highly useful relations with Nigeria, of great utility in generating parliamentary majorities at continental African (and UN) gatherings where Nigeria's influence is great.

This was the course of Soviet policy through the early seventies. Small advances were made here and there, small losses were sustained from time to time, but the balance sheet showed a slow but inexorable gain. Moreover, while the KGB fed weaponry to insurgents throughout the continent and nurtured friendly regimes, the United States, trying to extricate itself from Southeast Asia, was ignoring Africa almost altogether. And the Soviets were in no hurry to disabuse Mr. Kissinger of his notion of Africa's unimportance.

It was events *outside* Africa that gave Moscow its long-awaited

* The Russians lost a great deal with the change of government in Ghana—including a strategic airbase that had NATO strategists nervous. At the intelligence level, KGB and East German agents had been able to recruit operatives within Ghana (from among both the natives and the numerous, ever-present pan-African freedom fighters). Two KGB agents, Robert Akmerov and Col. Vladimir Sverchkov, had been allowed to set up a Technical Unit ("#3") to tap buildings where visiting heads of state and other dignitaries stayed. Russian-supplied patrol boats, used not by the navy, but by a presidentially-directed border guard unit, carried arms to opposition groups in neighboring countries, where Ghanaian and Russian interests ran parallel. By the time the coup occurred, a group of senior Ghanaian officials was working, under instructions from Nkrumah, to change Ghana into a "scientific socialist" republic on the "Eastern" model.

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opportunity for large-scale involvement. In 1974 Portugal's regime collapsed, and with it its African empire. In Lisbon, as well as in the colonies, Moscow of course had been doing its homework. Indeed, in Angola it had a genuine ally in the MPLA, a Marxist party it had been aiding for 15 years. The fall of South Vietnam in 1975 pushed Moscow's African door wide open, as it revealed the unwillingness of the United States to save its allies, let alone distant friends. By February 1976, while throwing a few sops at the American press and administration about negotiated settlements (only to gain time for the consolidation of military advances), the Soviets and their Cuban allies succeeded in installing the MPLA in power. Before long Moscow was flying anti-submarine warfare (ASW) planes out of Luanda, and was sitting in an excellent position to interfere with the enormous shipments of oil and minerals rounding the Cape of Good Hope.

Appetite grows with eating. Angola led to Shaba I, in the spring of 1977, when mercenary-gendarmes from Zaire, who had fought with the MPLA, invaded Zaire's mineral-rich Shaba province. They were stopped short—that time—by Moroccan troops flown in French planes, but it was just a probe. The new administration in Washington watched from the sidelines, a fact which Moscow duly noted. Then came the flip-flop in Mozambique, where a pro-Chinese Marxist party suddenly turned pro-Moscow—it saw which way the wind was blowing. But it was in the Horn of Africa that two decades of Soviet learning experience came together.

The Soviets had been deeply involved in Somalia since 1962. It became increasingly apparent that the Somalis were prepared to grant base privileges to Moscow only if they themselves could be heavily armed for their own, quite different, strategic reasons—regaining the Ogaden province of Ethiopia, or Western Somalia as it is called in Mogadishu. That presented Moscow with no difficulties so long as Ethiopia was a *de facto* ally of the United States; no matter that such intentions appeared to violate (as the Soviets pointed out, *after* they switched sides) the African norm of not disturbing the artificial, colonially-derived borders.

But then came the Ethiopian "revolution." Western observers noticed that the Dergue, the group of officers that came to power in 1974, was composed of vicious men, that warfare existed on the streets of Addis Ababa, that the empire of Haile Selassie was falling apart, and that the country's few competent administrators would be the first to go. The Soviets noticed something completely different—certain crucial similarities with their own history (and, interestingly, seasoned Marxists like Italy's Napolitani saw it in precisely the same way): Just as they themselves had murdered the Romanovs, the Dergue shot most of the royal family and let the Emperor waste to death rather quickly; as they themselves had accosted the Russian Orthodox Church and broken its back, so had the Dergue broken the Coptic church; as they had eliminated the nobility and rid the country of potential "imperialist stooges," no matter how competent, so had the Dergue. Then, in early 1977, emerged the most important similarity. One officer proved himself willing and able to take the "hard decision," the essential, Leninist chore: ruthlessly eliminating all those colleague-opponents at the top who could not stomach the "revolutionary" road. A Colonel Haile Mengistu Meriam simply walked into the cabinet room and shot everyone in cold blood. Mengistu had needed no instruction in Marxism, apparently, to learn the game of politics in Ethiopia, where politics is taken very seriously: But Moscow had found its man. While the West was filled with revul-

sion, the Soviets busied themselves planning the largest arms shipment in African history.

This is not to say that Mengistu had good Marxist credentials when he seized power; unlike Angola's Augustino Neto or Guinea's Sékou Touré, he had received no ideological training. But that question, by the time Mengistu had allied himself with Moscow, was as pointless as the question of whether Castro was truly a doctrinal Marxist when he came to power: For Mengistu, like Castro, was certainly a *de facto* Leninist. While Castro has survived courtesy of Moscow's help at the most sensitive levels—along with massive economic assistance to compensate for his disruption of the Cuban agricultural system—Mengistu is even more dependent on East German, Cuban, Polish, Hungarian, and Soviet aid; for Castro at least had a popular following of sorts in the wake of Batista's removal, and no regional dissidence as such. And Mengistu's Marxist rhetoric has grown in purity with the growth of Communist assistance *pari passu*.

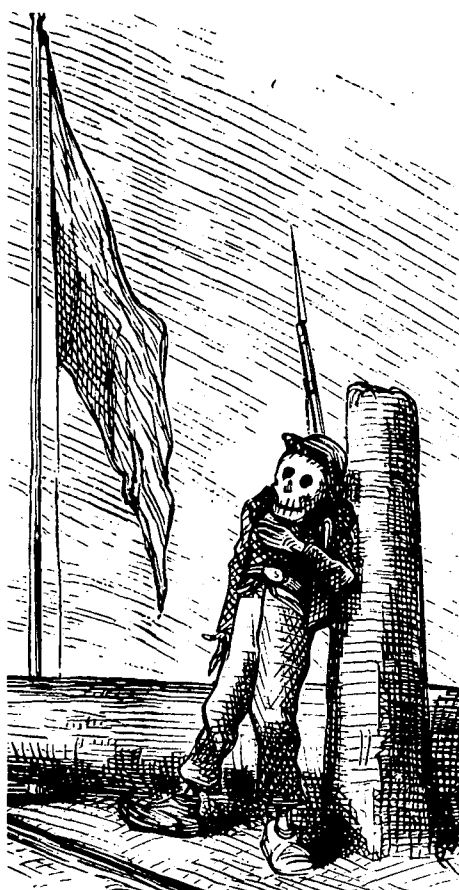
In early 1977 the Soviets still hoped to have it both ways on the Horn, to be the supplier and protector of both Somalia and Ethiopia (not in itself any more unthinkable than the 30-year-old relationship of the United States with Greece and Turkey). When the Soviets were forced to make a choice, it appears that their general staff opted to keep the bird in the hand—Somalia, with its secure Soviet-controlled naval bases and airstrips. But the Politburo cast the winning vote, and chose Ethiopia, ten times as big as Somalia, almost as well located for dominating the Persian Gulf, and better located for intimidating Saudi Arabia, across the narrow Red Sea. This way there was a chance of getting Somalia back, creating a *Pax Sovietica* in the entire Horn.

Again the Carter administration scoffed. All through 1977 its spokesmen talked of the Soviets' "Vietnam," until sometime at year's end it suddenly occurred to them that the Russians had positioned themselves to do precisely what Carter's most severe critics had predicted in February. The administration flailed away with words, words, and more words, while the Soviets acted, continuing to overfly Turkey and Iran illegally, continuing to build up a vast arsenal of tanks, artillery, and ammunition in Ethiopia, and routinely bombarding rebel-controlled Red Sea ports to

get their lethal shipments in. They struck in mid-February 1978, and the tactics they chose showed no regard for loss of life or hardship. Their objective was to win, which they did in the largest military operation in Africa since Rommel. The Somalis were decimated—the back of their army broken in ten days.

The results have been eloquent. Coups have been attempted in Somalia; and when the Cubans resisted moving into Eritrea—the other Ethiopian territory in rebellion, where Africa's most genuinely revolutionary movement has been organizing the former Italian colony since 1962—the Soviets stepped up their direct support. At the moment, the nationalist holdouts to the Mengistu-Soviet assault are falling.

The results are evident elsewhere too. The Soviets no longer even have to send expeditionary forces to trouble spots; the Carter administration saves them the trouble. Thus Mr. Vance tries to persuade the moderate Rhodesian coalition to sign its death warrant and cede power ("negotiate") to the Soviet-armed "Patriotic Front" (in particular, the Soviet favorite Joshua Nkomo), on the argument that otherwise the Soviets will get themselves ensconced in Rhodesia too. By now, the establishment of an Nkomo government by the end of the year appears almost certain.



When the Soviets say that Communism is the wave of the future, and that someday they expect Moscow to have preponderance in world affairs, Americans tend not to take them very seriously. But the patterns in Soviet political-military policy in Africa and the analyses in the Soviet press of Western (and their own) moves on the African chessboard fit together a little too congenially for such statements to be dismissed as "mere propaganda." The Soviets are serious people, and they mean what they say.

There is, first of all, the pursuit of strategically important countries in Africa and the abandonment of them when the strategic picture changes. Guinea was pursued relentlessly despite setback after setback, since it could be used for ASW operations against American submarines hovering in that area. Egypt's strategic value was obvious until 1972 when Moscow saw, before anyone else, the rising importance of the Persian Gulf. As a result, Moscow shifted its attention to Somalia and refused to buy off Sadat. As Saudi power began to tower over the rest of the Middle East, the Russians concluded that Ethiopia—across the Red Sea from the oil kingdom—could better serve Soviet interests than Somalia.

In southern Africa, of course, the Soviets can operate free of cost, as they have no interests there for the moment other than promoting instability. Angola and Mozambique, situated along Western sea lanes, are highly strategic pieces of real estate—especially considering the 40-fold increase in the amount of oil flowing around Africa since 1965. If Joshua Nkomo takes over Rhodesia, and Sam Nujomo Southwest Africa, both the likely result in part of American diplomacy, a belt of Marxist and Marxist-oriented states will border South Africa. Under these conditions, it seems doubtful that the South Africans could hold out for very long, at least in such a manner as to preserve economic stability in the region.

Yet perhaps it is all fortuitous. One could say that from *some* point of view, any African state is strategically useful and therefore fits into a pattern. But consider what the Soviets themselves say: If there is one constant in their reportage, it is that African minerals and Saudi-Iranian oil are critical to the survival of Western capitalism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, and so forth. While the American press treats Shaba's importance to Western industry almost as something to be ashamed of, certainly to be thought about as little as possible, the Soviet media harps on this relationship. So too with their reporting on southern Africa: They have been unwilling to treat Mr. Andrew Young with appropriate solicitude because of their strong need to insist that American "capitalists" are simply using him to buy support from the independent black states, so as to preserve access to critical minerals.

Perhaps one gets a taste of what is to come if one looks at reported Soviet preemptive purchases of cobalt (of which Zaire has over half the world's supply) *prior* to the Shaba II invasion in February of this year. The price of cobalt to the West quadrupled. The Soviets made a killing, while raising the question of whether they and their allies had foreknowledge of Shaba II. If one considers what Moscow might do when southern Africa is entirely in "friendly" hands and Zaire has been, finally, dismembered, one then understands Soviet strategy. It is, at a bare minimum, to gain control of the source of the West's critical minerals and, as extra insurance, control of the sea routes along which these are transported to Western Europe and America. And their timetable in Africa seems to be coinciding neatly with their achievement of a massive superiority in strategic arms. By the early 1980s they will be able to sterilize America's nuclear deterrent and strangle its economic lifelines.

"But why should African leaders want to exchange one set of masters for another?" many Westerners still ask (after twenty years' opportunity to answer their own question). It is worthwhile getting the answer straight. In the first place, "Africans" nowadays means Idi Amin, Joshua Nkomo, Augustino Neto, and Haile Mengistu Meriam. But that begs the question. Why such leadership? The answer lies in the unstructured character of African states. There is probably only one state in Africa that, by classical definition, merits the term "nation"—and that one, Somalia, is a further anomaly in that many of its people lie outside its boundaries. The rest are, in varying degrees, plural states with rival ethnic groups vying for top position—winners using it to the disadvantage of the rest. Genocide is not ruled out.

The difficulties of grappling with the colonial succession, of making rules stick, and of legitimizing patterns of governance make a harsh ideology attractive to such insecure leaderships. Leninism is nothing if not a requirement to be ruthless to one's opponents: History and the masses demand and require it. How attractive such an ideology must be to a Western-educated leader, eager to jail his opponents, afraid of losing Western approbation if he tries; how irresistible to a second-generation leader, lacking even a veneer of education, eager to get on with personal rule.

There is an additional benefit. Independence solved few economic problems in Africa, often it worsened existing ones. Marxism-Leninism provides an excuse, once again, for failure—this time for economic failure. It explains that "neo-colonialism" and "imperialism" are still conspiring against the poor Third World.

The United States and its European allies, alas, have no such ready-made answers to these almost intractable African problems. We do have, however, a surprising store of goodwill and potential influence almost everywhere, if only because "the masses," when they look outward, in fact look to us for their models in everything from education to fashion. But while Europeans for the most part, and France most emphatically, have kept in mind the distinction between the short-term needs of the rulers and the long-term aspirations of the people, American policy in Africa has derived from two reinforcing, allegedly moral, but thoroughly wrong-headed, impulses.

The first is the isolationist reaction to Vietnam—what an important Asian intellectual-diplomat has called our "over-reaction to an over-reaction," and what has led congressional leaders to deny the importance of Soviet activity in Africa from Angola onwards. The second is the attitude of the new, young members of the Carter administration, who are determined, it seems, not only to atone for Vietnam, but to reenact their earlier experience in the civil-rights struggles of the south. At the center of this new group is the only man to whom Jimmy Carter has said he owes anything for his election: Ambassador Andrew Young. Until this spring, Young exercised more influence than anyone in shaping U.S. policy in Africa. That policy, as he once characterized it, is to be "nice guys." "Africans are coming to realize that Russians are just gun-swingers. We are providing a much better model. In the long run that will pay off."

Such has been the operational premise of American inaction in Africa. That this premise is, of course, entirely false is something the Africans and the Russians have no trouble seeing. As Max Beloff said recently: "The Russians have realized that what Third World regimes want to know is not who is going to be nicer to them, but who is going to come out on top. The clumsiness of Soviet diplomacy at a personal level is counterbalanced by the growing conviction that the West can be trusted not to resist Soviet advances and that the path to safety lies in maintaining or extending links with Moscow." □

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.

Fingering the Feds

While DEA agents spend most of their time undercover—buying drugs, “flipping” dealers, and kicking in doors—FBI agents usually keep regular hours and never wear disguises. Both agencies, however, suffer from such inefficiencies as paper-shuffling and lenient federal judges.

For the ordinary citizen law enforcement is symbolized by the uniformed cop, patrolling his beat, twirling a nightstick, festooned with handcuffs, revolver, and ammunition, and ready and able to pursue and drag off burglars, purse-snatchers, and muggers. The citizen wishes there were more such guardians of law and order, especially on his block. He thinks nostalgically of such legendary scourges of the criminal class as Inspector Alexander S. (“Clubber”) Williams, who made his mark in and on the New York Police Department a century ago and is still remembered for his observation that “there is more law in the end of a policeman’s nightstick than in a decision of the Supreme Court.”

Williams did in fact keep the old Gas House district, as tough as America has ever known, fairly free of violent crime by the simple expedient of using his formidable brawn and matchless skill with the nightstick on any known thugs who had the temerity to appear on the street and by occasionally raiding the dives in which they hung out. He took a very permissive view of such “consensual” or “victimless” crimes as gambling and prostitution (drugs were not much of a problem in his day), so long as he got his cut. (It was he who christened the sinful midtown area between Fifth and Seventh Avenues “the Tenderloin,” when he said of his transfer there that “I’ve had nothing but chuck steak for a long time, and now I’m going to get a little of the tenderloin.” He later explained to the Lexow Committee, which was investigating police corruption in the nineties, that he had accumulated his enormous fortune by speculating in building lots in Japan.)

The cop-on-the-beat variety of law enforcement is very different from that practiced by the federal investigative agencies, exemplified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Agency, which are the focus of James Q. Wilson’s new book, *The Investigators*.^{*} They have tasks and problems—for example, making a case against unidentified perpetrators of crimes whose victims and witnesses may be highly reluctant to complain or testify—which do not much resemble those of local police departments. The FBI rarely catches a criminal *in flagrante delicto*; the DEA often does, but only by instigating the offense, persuading a drug dealer to make a sale to an undercover agent, with other undercover agents as witnesses. The two agencies’ characteristic *modi operandi* and administrative organizations are equally different. Professor Wilson acutely analyzes their goals (including the very important ones of establishing and maintaining their autonomy and getting maximum appropriations out of Congress), their methods, and the constraints, political and legal, under which they must operate.

The FBI, particularly in the glory days of J. Edgar Hoover, has been the more successful of the two, though its image and autonomy under Hoover’s successors are not what they were. In his day G-men were perceived by the public and the politicians as fearless, indefatigable, and efficient crime-busters. The Bureau’s agents, though their functions were always primarily investigative, with

the main emphasis on prosaic interviewing and on collection and collation of evidence, even acquired a reputation as super Dick Tracys, shooting it out with the likes of John Dillinger and Alvin Karpis. (In fact, only a couple of dozen FBI agents have been killed by criminals since the Bureau was founded in 1924, whereas in a normal year about 100 local policemen are murdered in the line of duty.) But by and large, although the public is concerned about bank robbery, organized and white-collar crime, thefts from shipments in interstate commerce, drug peddling, and the other violations the two federal agencies investigate, it worries more about crime in the street, which is usually handled by local law enforcers. Federal offenses don’t affect many people directly, they are not commonly violent, and they do not instill personal fear in ordinary citizens. Despite these handicaps, Hoover’s mastery of public relations was such that no other bureaucrat was treated with such deference on Capitol Hill, and no President, much less any Attorney General, ever thought of firing him, or asking him to retire after he had long passed the usual age, or even trying to encroach on his absolute control of the Bureau. His unique eminence is summed up in the story of the guard at the Department of Justice who told an Attorney General, trying to get into his office on Sunday afternoon without the proper identification, “I don’t care if you’re J. Edgar Hoover himself, you can’t get in without a pass.” The tale may be apocryphal, but it could easily be true. To this day if you mention the name “Hoover” to an average American, he is more likely to think of J. Edgar than Herbert C. *The Investigators* puts Hoover’s memory, his virtues and his faults, in proper perspective.

But even the more sophisticated members of the public are likely to have a somewhat inaccurate perception of the FBI and its investigative techniques. A minority, well exemplified by a rather silly book, *Freedom Spent*, by the *New Yorker*’s Richard Harris, see the Bureau as engaged in a sinister conspiracy against the constitutional rights of people with left-wing opinions. (Although it is true that Hoover’s views on domestic security, especially in his crotchety old age, failed, like those of a lot of liberals, to distinguish sufficiently between violent radicals and those who were tiresome but innocuous, the FBI has usually shown a decent respect for the Constitution; its agents, as Professor Wilson points out, gave *Miranda* warnings to suspects being interviewed long before they were required by the Supreme Court. The liberals, of course, never had any harsh words for Hoover’s surveillance and harassment of the Ku Klux Klan, which dated from the beginning of his tenure, a time when the Klan had plenty of political clout and many friends in Congress.) The majority, largely on the basis of the Bureau’s own propaganda, think of it as working miracles of scientific detection with computers, blood samples, fingerprints, and ballistic laboratories. →

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^{*}*The Investigators: Managing FBI and Narcotics Agents*; Basic Books; \$10.95.

There is some truth in this too, but not as much as you might think after taking your kids on one of the Bureau's guided tours. In fact, as Professor Wilson demonstrates in a lengthy chapter, the FBI depends largely, and the DEA almost entirely, on informers. There is much sense in the axioms about setting a thief to catch a thief, and about the lack of honor among thieves. An agent's most important skill, to whose improvement neither agency pays enough attention, is to use and recruit informers. The FBI's job is probably easier than the DEA's, for many of its informants are honest citizens, willing to testify if necessary. When they aren't, the Bureau has problems, for its policy, generally backed up by the courts, is never to "burn" an undercover informer by using him as a witness or otherwise revealing his identity. Thus, when the FBI arrested three robbers who had stolen \$4 million in cash and jewels from the Hotel Pierre in New York, two could be convicted only on lesser charges and one got off scot-free, because the Bureau would not throw away its valuable informer, a fence to whom the thieves had taken the gems. In rare cases, when the crime and criminal are very important, and the informer's testimony is essential for conviction, it may go to the extreme and extremely expensive length of protecting him from retaliation by furnishing him with a new identity and a new residence.

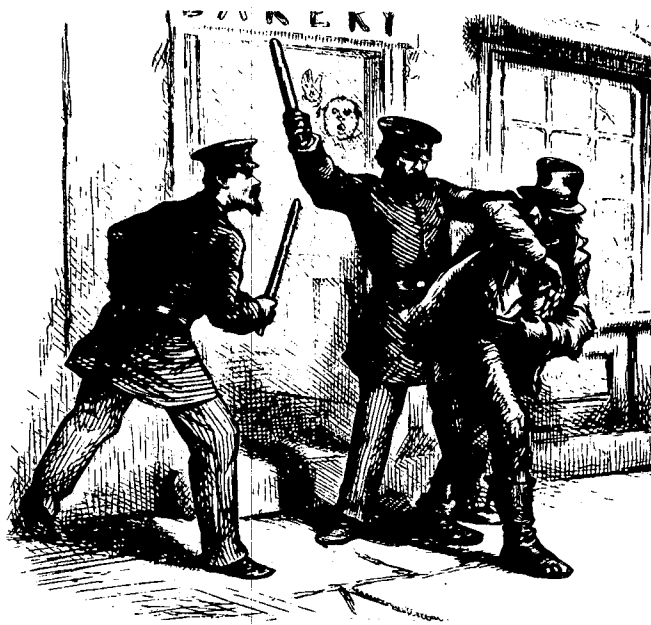
The DEA's informers are almost always criminals themselves, usually petty, and correspondingly unreliable and hard to handle. The commonest technique of the drug agents is to get the goods on a street peddler (known as a Class IV offender or, if he deals in quantities over an ounce of heroin or cocaine, as a Class III) by an undercover buy, and then persuade him to "work off the beef" by "duking in" the agents to his suppliers, who can then be "flipped" in a similar way. In theory this process can lead all the way up to the Class II violators, wholesalers, and even to the Class I's, the top executives of smuggling operations and illegal laboratories. In practice the big fish are not often caught, among other reasons because there is great pressure on the agents to produce arrest statistics by busting the small retailers who are the most numerous and most easily caught. There is more emphasis on quantity than quality of arrests in the DEA; the FBI is less likely to invest its resources in small cases, though it too is under some pressure to produce statistics, however meaningless or misleading.

The two agencies are thus dissimilar in many respects, for reasons that *The Investigators* thoroughly expounds. The FBI is highly centralized, with strict control from the top, though less so than in Hoover's day. The DEA is highly decentralized, despite recurrent efforts by its directors and headquarters staff to impose such control. FBI agents still look as square, honest, and trustworthy as so many junior bank executives. (A lot of them are in fact lawyers and accountants, though fewer than formerly; many have a background in the regular military services.) DEA agents, most of whom operate undercover, must look and act like petty criminals or at least street people. It is no particular advantage to an FBI agent to be black or Hispanic, but a street-wise black agent is likely to do well in the DEA.

DEA agents love the excitement and sometimes danger of the chase, making buys and kicking in doors. FBI agents rarely engage in hot pursuit, usually keep regular working hours, and almost never operate in disguise. (I was probably wrong a few years ago when I concluded that at least half the delegates to a New Politics convention held at Yale Law School must be FBI men, on the ground that no real radical could possibly look so radical.) The

basic difference is summed up by Professor Wilson: The main job of the FBI agent is to investigate crimes by interviewing people who may know something about them; the main job of the DEA agent is to instigate crimes, which requires that he pass as an addict or dealer himself.

The FBI, though it may occasionally shift its resources from one kind of crime to another, as when Hoover was finally persuaded that public and congressional opinion wanted more attention paid to the Mafia (always known in the Bureau as LCN, for *La Cosa Nostra*) or white-collar crime (bribery, fraud on the government, corruption of public officials, and so forth), is generally clearer about its priorities than the DEA. The latter agency has never been quite sure about the relative importance of heroin, cocaine, marijuana and hashish, and dangerous drugs like barbiturates, LSD, and amphetamines. Its agents tend to think that only heroin is really important, though cocaine has had a certain vogue. Many of them regard the others as "kiddie dope" and resent having to spend time on them; headquarters has not always agreed. Corruption has never been a problem in the FBI since Hoover took over in 1924; the DEA's management has to watch out for it, for obvious reasons.



Despite all the differences, the two agencies have some fundamental problems in common. Both of them share jurisdiction with local police (and, in the case of the DEA, also with the Treasury's Customs Service), and this means that there is often rivalry, friction, and lack of cooperation—the feds are not anxious to let the locals grab credit for arrests and convictions, and vice versa. Within each agency there is the usual friction between line and staff. Both have to worry about the lawfulness of search and seizure, including wiretaps and other types of electronic surveillance, and the admissibility of self-incriminating statements. (The DEA in particular has to be careful about the ill-defined line between entrapment and persuading a suspect to commit a crime, which he is only too glad to commit, in the presence of under-

cover agents.) The decision to prosecute is up to the United States Attorney and his assistants, and the investigators often resent his refusal to prosecute a case that they think important and on which they have worked hard. Both agencies grumble about lenient federal judges, especially (as might be expected) in the hyper-liberal District of Massachusetts. Aside from the frustration any cop feels when he sees a criminal back on the street immediately or after a few months, it is harder to turn a criminal into an informer if he has reason to believe that, even if he is convicted, the judge will take a tolerant view of his crime. Above all, both agencies must be sensitive to public and political opinion, concentrating on those violations that the public thinks serious, forgetting about such things as sales of small quantities of marijuana, and avoiding techniques of investigation which, even if within the letter of the law, seem like dirty pool. What about the undercover informer—e.g., one in the KKK—who must, if he is not to blow his cover, participate in crimes himself? (Sophisticated terrorist organizations do not trust a recruit until he has himself engaged in an assassination or bombing.)

Evaluating the efficiency of the FBI and DEA is at best even more difficult than assessing the results achieved by other bureaucracies; unlike private enterprises, they cannot be judged by earnings per share. The core problem is the weight to be given to the quality of arrests and convictions, i.e., the size and seriousness of the crime and the criminal, the amount of stolen

property recovered or of drugs seized, as distinct from the mere numbers, which can be very deceptive. For example, when local police found a stolen car that had been transported across a state line, the FBI used to chalk it up as an "FBI recovery," though the agency had done little or nothing. For the DEA, does one heroin dealer equal four marijuana smugglers, or maybe six or eight? Neither agency has an impressive percentage of convictions in the cases they investigate; the statistics, although scarce and unreliable (the FBI does not even calculate rates of solution or conviction), suggest that the FBI's rate ranges between 7 and 15 percent, depending on the type of case, and that the DEA's batting average is even lower. This does not in itself prove that the agencies are inefficient; the paucity of convictions is in large part attributable to legal and constitutional restraints on law enforcement. The KGB could probably produce really dramatic and accurate statistics, if it had any need to make a favorable impression on public opinion. As Professor Wilson rightly remarks, it is better to have law enforcers who must respect the liberties of the citizen and public opinion. I can stand criminals at large more easily than I could stand the KGB.

But Professor Wilson puts his finger on some genuine inefficiencies—e.g., too many reports, too much paper-shuffling, too many inspections of the troops in the line, too much weight attached to making statistics. He makes some modest and cautious suggestions for administrative reforms—more selection and training of agents skilled in the development and use of informers, less emphasis on

numbers, less paperwork, and so forth. Perhaps the DEA should make street peddlers its prime target, on the theory that the big boys are too hard to catch (cut off the French Connection, and the hydra grows a dozen Mexican and Hong Kong heads) and that if the retail distributors are put out of business the manufacturers and wholesalers will go hungry. Perhaps the two agencies should be merged. The executives of the agencies are aware of the need for at least some reforms. The trouble is that, as many cabinet officers and even Presidents have learned, the ways and habits of bureaucracy are nearly immovable objects. The problem is pretty accurately summed up in the late Thurman Arnold's Corollary to Parkinson's Law: "No new government activity can possibly be effectively carried out by any established government organization."

Professor Wilson has a lucid style, but *The Investigators* is not easy reading. Government organization charts and policy directives were never my favorite subjects, even in the days when I had to read and sometimes write them myself, although Wilson probably interprets them as well as anyone could. It is hard to keep straight the superabundance of acronyms like COINTELPRO and G-DEP and ODALE; there ought to be a glossary. The book is too long and sometimes a trifle repetitious. I suspect that Professor Wilson found himself, like many professors, including me, with a stack of material accumulated in his consulting work, which he hated to waste. He should have turned it into a longish article, not a book. Nevertheless, *The Investigators* is a sane and useful essay on law enforcement, of which there are far too few. □

William H. Nolte

Evan Connell the Ironist

Novelist Evan Connell has yet to be accorded the renown of some of his contemporaries, because unlike Gore Vidal or Truman Capote he is neither a charlatan nor a voodoo-dancer.

If critical reception were the sole criterion for determining the reputation of a writer, Evan S. Connell, Jr., would certainly be better known than he is. But the fact is that though his books have been widely reviewed and highly praised, he has yet to be accorded the renown of some of his contemporaries—some of them unfit to punctuate his prose. No one would argue, for example, that his name is as readily recognizable as that of Norman Mailer or Gore Vidal or Truman Capote, men who have parlayed playing the fool for gossip columnists and writing pornography for the masses into gate receipts that would have pleased a Caligula, or a P.T. Barnum. That such sleight-of-hand performers possess a talent of sorts is undeniable; it is no less obvious that such a talent is essentially that of circus performers and voodoo dancers. Nor for that matter has Connell been so lovingly embraced by academics as have the likes of Thomas Pynchon and John Hawkes. The current rage for black humor among the sophomores of both the student body and faculty has put wind in the sails of more fourth-raters than any fad since the halcyon days of the Freudian frauds and the proletarian poseurs. Neither a gifted charlatan, nor an exotic, nor an obscurantist, nor a black humorist, Connell is nonetheless, as one critic remarked, "a writer whose high professionalism has not kept him from a series of increasingly

ambitious and valuable experiments." He is one of the very few novelists whose books I purchase as a matter of course.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1924, Connell attended Southwest High School before going to Dartmouth College. Years later he noted, "While at Dartmouth I was planning to become a doctor, as my father is, and as his father was. I think that if there had not been a second World War, I might have continued that direction for at least another year or so." Instead he joined the Navy as an aviation cadet. After receiving his wings, on VE Day, he served as a flight instructor until being discharged. Soon after, Connell took a degree in English at Kansas, where he studied fiction writing under Ray B. West. Later he studied under such well-known teachers of writing as Wallace Stegner at Stanford, Helen Hull at Columbia, and finally Walter Van Tilburg Clark in San Francisco (where he lived until recently moving across the bay to Sausalito). During that apprentice period he also spent two years in Europe. Although he had decided to become a writer by the time he left the Navy at the age of twenty-one, he also studied painting and sculpture; he once remarked that, given different circumstances earlier in his life, he probably would have become a sculptor.

Connell drew heavily on his experience as a pilot to write *The Patriot* (1960), in which the central protagonist is a bumbling cadet named Melvin Isaacs, who washes out of flight school a week before he is to graduate. Aside from the surface parallels (Isaacs is also from Kansas City), there is little resemblance between author and fictional character. If any character in *The Patriot* resembles Connell, it is Patrick Cole, an extremely skeptical and aloof young

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man who has learned too much from his study of history and current events to be gulled by war-effort propaganda—although I think it obvious that much of what Cole knows was learned a good deal later by the author. One of the most memorable (and didactic) passages in the novel concerns Cole's debunking of Isaacs' simple-minded patriotism, which, according to Cole/Connell, is no different from the patriotic fustian common to men everywhere. But it is not the love of one's country which so appalls Connell; rather, it is the hypocrisy which that patriotism invariably breeds.

Isaacs is depicted as essentially an innocent and even likeable schlemiel, forever banging his shins against the hard rock of reality. He is an object lesson in the dangers of self-delusion, the leading hallmark, Connell implies, of our species. The only times Isaacs succeeds in any fashion are when he purposely strives to lose. Near the end of the novel, for example, he concocts, as a joke and in defiance of the art school, a pile of junk as his entry for a sculpture contest, which, to his utter amazement, he wins. By novel's end he has succeeded in contracting a disastrous marriage—disastrous because it can only compound his sense of defeat and helplessness. While the novel includes some excellent scenes, particularly those about flight training, and contains some deliciously satiric passages on modern art, it is somehow misshapen, lacking any single thread of meaning or unifying purpose. Its total effect is somewhat less than its individual parts.

Connell's first published work was in the short-story form. His stories have appeared in various magazines, textbooks, and anthologies, including *Prize Stories* of 1949 and 1951 and *Best American Short Stories* of 1955 and 1957. So far two volumes have been published, *The Anatomy Lesson and Other Stories* (1957) and *At the Crossroads* (1965). If some of them fail, as one critic put it, "because of the heavy burden of private comment and extraneous detail carried by the stream of the narrative," his best stories stick in the memory like puzzles the reader dimly recalls having tried to solve before but never quite successfully. In all of them there is playful irony, as if the author were more concerned with proving to the reader that none of us fully understands either himself or those about him than with explaining or simply reporting human behavior. They are, in effect, little lessons in our lack of understanding. And if the stories baffle the reader, they also disturb him and reveal the limits of his vision.

But not all of Connell's tales are puzzling. "The Palace of the Moorish Kings," for instance, is straightforward and accessible. It reminds me of Joseph Conrad's best short fiction—a bit wistful, softly ironic, encapsulated in an aura of romance but at bottom no more romantic than a visit to the proctologist. In broadest outline, it is the story of a man, now in middle years, who *lives* the dreams that he and his friends back home cherish—of travelling up and down on the earth, of never settling in a rut. When in the end he decides to return home, we feel the same dismay felt by his friends, who without realizing it had "trusted him to keep [their] youth."

In his best fiction Connell provides us with that shared experience so important to understanding, the *sine qua non* of all art. In his first published novel, *Mrs. Bridge* (1959), Connell carefully records the life of a middle-aged woman, a wife and mother puzzled by events around her, through a long series of episodic vignettes. Certainly Mrs. Bridge is one of the most fully realized characters in American fiction. Indeed, the novel is one of the very few written since World War II that clearly deserves to be called, as it has been, a masterpiece. In the opening chapter, entitled "Love and Marriage" (it quickly becomes apparent that the chapter titles nearly always express a muted irony), the author introduces Mrs. Bridge: "Her first name was India—she was never able to get used to it. It seemed to her that her parents must have been thinking of someone else when they named her. Or were they hoping for another sort of daughter? As a child she was often on the point of inquiring, but time passed, and she never did." In the course of the two-page vignette, she grows up, meets and marries a young lawyer named Walter Bridge, and moves with him to Kansas City. During their courtship Walter talks to her about Ruskin and Robert Ingersoll and reads verses from the *Rubáiyát* to

her. He promises to take her one day to Europe, which in fact he does years later when both are pretty much beyond wanting to go. In the simplicity of the account, almost shocking in its stark recording of a few important incidents, her whole life is outlined. It is only left for the author to fill in the details, which he does with compassion and humor (only an utterly humorless reader could avoid laughing out loud several times while reading the book) and with an irony that makes us wonder uneasily if we are not really laughing at ourselves.

While Mrs. Bridge is at the center of the novel, never far removed from any scene in the book, Connell depicts the small world she inhabits in an unforgettable manner. Her three children grow up, make friends, get in the kind of trouble that children have, and finally move out from under the parental wings—just as in most families. We meet various family friends, most of them leading lives as essentially hollow and hopeless as the life of Mrs. Bridge. The amazing thing about the novel is that we pity and censure the characters at the same time. Nowhere else in our literature has the boredom of the leisure class (in this case, the upper-middle class) been more vividly portrayed. With all our modern conveniences, Connell implies, we have succeeded in making life well-nigh unbearable. But not quite. Near the end of the novel, Mrs. Bridge wakes one warm, windy morning in June and listens to "the wind in the trees, to the scratching of the evergreen branches against the house, and wonders if she was about to die. She did not feel ill, but she had no confidence in her life. Why should her heart keep beating? What was there to live for? Then she grew cheerful because she recalled her husband had told her to get the Lincoln waxed and polished."

Ten years later, Connell returned to the theme and structure of *Mrs. Bridge* in the companion volume, *Mr. Bridge* (1969). Although some of the same events are described in the novels, they might be read one after the other without any sense of repetition. *Mr. Bridge* is a more somber work, and the satire has a bite that makes one wince as well as laugh. Part of the reason for the darker tone is doubtless that Mr. Bridge is more self-assured than his wife, and hence more unyielding in his prejudices. Moreover, Mr. Bridge does have a set of values, albeit too stuffy and narrow to accommodate normal human failings, which sustain him after a fashion, whereas Mrs. Bridge is forever seeking, in her ineffectual way, something in which to believe, something that might give meaning to her admittedly meaningless life. If we laugh at her we still must sympathize with her predicament. On the other hand, most readers will reject the insular views of Mr. Bridge—although I think Connell exaggerated when he commented in an interview on Mr. Bridge's "insane bigotry." With all his shortcomings, Mr. Bridge is surely a decent enough fellow when compared with other members of the species. Unfortunately, he insists on fashioning life to fit a mold so narrow as to leave out of account all that resists regimentation or reduction to a few simple formulae. He is so convinced that everything can be explained rationally, so insistent that he give and be given reasons for his and his loved ones' actions, that he seems enigmatic and even quixotic to those around him. He is, in short, a juiceless fellow, with no more sap to him than is contained in the legal documents that occupy his working hours.

Various critics have compared *Mr. Bridge* to Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt*, a comparison that is apposite only to a point. Aside from being a hollow simpleton, almost a clown, Babbitt is a cheat and a fraud. Mr. Bridge is never dishonest, nor does he ever knowingly injure anyone. On the other hand, Babbitt does experience moments of joy and has dreams of changing his life; he at least partially realizes the insipidity of his existence. Mr. Bridge could never conceive his way of life as being anything other than it is, and his life is barren of joy. The last lines of the novel underline the fact: "He remembered enthusiasm, hope, and a kind of jubilation or exultation. Cheerfulness, yes, and joviality, and the brief gratification of sex. Gladness, too, fullness of heart, appreciation, and many other emotions. But not joy. No, that belonged to simpler minds."

Following *The Patriot* Connell wrote *Notes from a Bottle Found on the Beach at Carmel* (1963), a work that defies

categorization. Most have called it an epic poem, or have anyway referred to it as poetry. In testifying to its "growing underground reputation" George Garrett called it a poem "of the size and scope of Pound's *Cantos*." As he did with *Mrs. Bridge*, Connell published, ten years after *Notes*, a companion volume, entitled *Points for a Compass Rose* (1973), which was nominated for the National Book Award for Poetry in 1974. Paul Gray briefly described the two companion sets this way: "*Mrs. Bridge* (1959) and *Mr. Bridge* (1969) spun out a series of vignettes in the Midwestern lives of their protagonists; the accretions were devastating catalogues of anomie. In *Notes from a Bottle Found on the Beach at Carmel* (1963) and *Points for a Compass Rose* (1973), Connell shored fragments of history and reflection against our ruin—casting them in prose lines that rang with poetry." Gray's description is apt since only in the loosest sense of the word can either of the books be considered poetry; that they have been so considered is doubtless attributable to the typographical arrangement of the prose on the pages. It matters little, of course, what one calls the brief notes; it is their effect on the reader that counts. And the verse arrangement does add, at times, to that effect.

While the identity of the notetaker in each volume changes from section to section, he is most prominently a combination of Magus and Wandering Jew, observing and collating ancient and modern thought and acts in order to show how repetitively absurd, in the main, are human beliefs and how tawdry are most human aspirations and deeds. The speaker constantly reminds us of the reception given most of the great personages of the past who sought to break out of the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic delusions adhered to by the vast majority of mankind. In glistening prose the "I" paraphrases the more idiotic beliefs of the ancients—not so much to reveal the absurdity of the views as to remind us of our shaky hold on reality. The fact that we no longer subscribe to this or that view, long since exploded, by no means protects us from believing today what is equally at odds with reason or common sense. In his frequently amusing remarks, the speaker seldom offers an opinion himself; indeed, he often expresses the views matter-of-factly. Mixed in with the historical or ideological "facts" are comments that defy comprehension, little puzzles for the imagination. For example:

What has grown up to the gates of the city.
An owl has flown into the garden.
At night I have listened for Cathedral bells,
remembering Saint-Etienne.

Some bring to mind Nietzsche's Zarathustra; some remind me of Robinson Jeffers' *Inhumanist*, like this one, which gives the lie to the flatulent optimism of Faulkner's famous Nobel Address:

Again today, prescience and afterknowledge;
I have no further doubt.
We are void of soul; we are not immortal; we will not
endure, nor prevail.

Some express an extreme solipsism, certainly not advocated by the author. The most devastating notes concern religious beliefs and the brutality of religious fanatics. The derision can also be humorous: "How many churches count among their priceless relics/the prepucce of Jesus Christ? The answer is twelve."

In both *Notes* and *Points* Connell surveys the museums, archeological digs, civilizations, and assorted triumphs and despairs of the human animal with an eye for his more outrageous antics. Both books, and particularly *Points*, read like selections from an exotic, unexpurgated *Encyclopaedia Britannica*—written

by a satanic historian-scholar-philosopher intent on reminding us that yesterday's follies are the news stories of today. "Of what value is life," the speaker asks in *Points*, "if it's not woven on history's loom into other lives?" Because of their structure and, more obviously, their content, such books will never enjoy a very wide appeal, but neither can they be disregarded by discerning readers. Few novels cast such a spell.

In *The Diary of a Rapist* (1966) Connell limits his point of view to the mind of a psychopath, a young man named Earl Summerfield, who is as convincingly real as he is frightening to behold. Unhappily married, bored with his job at a federal employment bureau, convinced that he has been badly treated by the fates, he becomes fascinated with newspaper accounts of violent crimes. One critic noted that in "the unraveling of a diseased mind capable of acts which are absolute in their extremity, Connell succeeds overpoweringly—his novel is a triumph of art over case history." Repelled by what he reads and finally convinced of the depravity of man, the somewhat fastidious and moralistic Summerfield convinces himself that only through violence can he revolt against his essential helplessness. He is the perfect, albeit

exaggerated, modern romantic—introspective, self-pitying, misogynous, egotistic. His sexual crimes emphasize his belief that man, including himself, deserves damnation.

In *The Connoisseur* (1974) Connell again depicts the power of obsession—this time in the story of Karl Muhlbach, a middle-aged, conservative New York insurance executive, who, while on a brief business trip to New Mexico, purchases a small (presumably pre-Columbian) figurine. On returning to New York with his art object, he begins a search for the past which the figurine symbolizes. Himself a connoisseur of early Mexican art, Connell takes his reader on a guided tour of the literature, museums, art shops, and fakeries which now occupy his protagonist to the exclusion of everything else around him—his job, his children, his acquaintances.

A widower, Muhlbach pays the inevitable price for having taken as his "mistress" that which he can never fully understand, let alone possess.

Muhlbach is again the central character of *Double Honeymoon* (1976). In the opening scene, by far the most vivid in the novel, he meets Lambeth Brett at a cocktail party which both have attended for lack of an excuse to remain away. Though the much younger Lambeth displays, indeed exudes, every quality that the staid Muhlbach might be expected to dismiss as contemptible—excepting only her blonde beauty, her youthfulness, and, finally, the mystery which her world-weary insouciance seems to suggest—he is interested, then desirous, and finally enthralled. The theme is found throughout Connell's *opera*—man's fondness for the unreal, his eternal quest for *ignes fatui*. While Muhlbach thinks of her, after a time, as one of life's "unspeakable delights and...deludes himself into thinking their affair has more meaning and potential than is possible," the reader is never in any doubt as to the outcome. The tale is as old as Adam and Eve and just as predictable, and were it told by a journeyman novelist we would throw it in the fire long before the final break-up when Muhlbach is forced to see Lambeth as she is rather than as his imagination has painted her. A bad story but nevertheless told well.

But let it go. The author of the *Bridge* novels and the two volumes of notes and vatic meditations can afford now and again to fall short of the high standard he has set—a standard that very few of his contemporaries have so much as approached. □



Carter and Congress: The No Deal Coalition

Recent "reforms" of the presidential nominating process have divorced Democratic presidential nominees from the party organizations that nominate congressmen. Which is why Jimmy Carter and Tip O'Neill never had their honeymoon.

American politics, as we all know, is coalition politics. Any political system embracing a population so diverse as ours is bound to give birth to factions, each pursuing its own interests. So long as these factions obey majoritarian rules in their mutual dealings, and so long as no faction by itself is large enough to constitute a stable majority, coalitions must be built. Otherwise the machinery of government could not be enlisted on behalf of the goals of any faction. The making and tending of coalitions thus become central tasks of democratic politics.

In the United States, this process takes place through a series of institutions that strongly encourage coalitions to form. Chief among these is the system of winner-take-all elections. Seats in Congress are contested one at a time, one in each constituency. This means there is no incentive for coming in second, as would be true in a multi-member electoral arrangement. In principle, all the congressmen from a state could run in an at-large election, and the top three or eight—whatever number the state was entitled to—would be declared elected. Such a system puts a premium on differentiation rather than coalition-building among politicians. Each contestant tries to find his own special constituency, and tries, not to gather up a majority, but simply to get enough votes to end up on the list of winners. This is not, however, the way we do things. Congressional candidates are obliged to win elections by majorities, and all those who finish behind the first-place candidate are losers.

In the race for the presidency, the same logic prevails. One of the hidden virtues of the electoral college, with its aggregation of votes state by state and the custom of casting all the electoral votes of a state for the winner within the state, is that coalition-building within each state, looking toward the assembly of a majority vote, is encouraged. Under a direct election system, incentives would run in the opposite direction. Instead of pressing politicians toward coalitions, factions would be encouraged. Each new entrant into the presidential race, carrying with him an unknown potential for capturing the loosely-attached votes of a front-runner, would create an invitation for the next presidential hopeful, and the next, until, in a crowded electoral field, differentiation, however marginal, and not consensus-building, would provide the best chance for victory.

In some states, gubernatorial races and primary elections are designed in this fashion—with free-for-all primaries—and in these states factional warfare is frequently at fever pitch. When the incentives are weak for politicians of divergent opinions to work together, they rarely overcome their natural antipathies. Thus the poisonous political strife of such places as Texas. Meanwhile, in such unlikely places as Connecticut, where ethnic rivalry is the engine of politics, "balanced" tickets and mutual accommodations

are the norm, owing to such consensus-forcing institutions as state party nominating conventions.

The far-reaching changes of the last decade in the presidential nominating process have on the whole discouraged the building of coalitions. This is surely one lesson to be drawn from the difficulties Jimmy Carter has experienced in confronting a Congress overwhelmingly controlled by his own party. Carter's path to the nomination did not require making peace with the congeries of political organizations that nominated those congressmen and senators. Rather, the newly-minted reforms of the nomination process compelled him to build his own organization, state by state, and primary by primary. His task was not to assemble a majority, but to come out ahead of the other contestants as frequently as he could.

Abolition of the electoral college, as is now frequently proposed, would reduce the need for coalitions even more. It would make the nomination of a party convention less valuable, and encourage popular candidates to stay in the race even without a party endorsement, in the hope of securing enough votes on a cross-party basis to land a spot in the runoff.

All this suggests that coalition-building is a primary task of American political parties. Where party organizations are strong, coalitions flourish; where they are weak, factional rivalry prevails. In fact, the great struggles for control of our leading national parties can be seen as attempts to write the rules so as to favor either coalition-building or factionalism.

In Congress coalition politics is still strong, and this explains in part the sharp differences between President Carter and the congressional Democratic majority. Coalition-forcing rules in Congress include the need to build successive majorities, first in subcommittees and committees, and then on the floor of each House, for every law passed. Authority over diverse matters is widely allocated, and the building of consensus around any particular course of action requires enormous effort. Moreover, each such effort must be undertaken in the context of all other, similar efforts. And that is what coalition-building is all about. As James Madison saw, the varying conditions of men, their differing perceptions of what is in their own interest, of what is good, what is better, what is important, provide the raw material out of which nontyrannical majorities may be created.

The institution of party eases the considerable friction of this process in Congress as well. Party loyalties create a basis for common action among disparate members. By the norms of the place, party leaders are granted legitimacy to move among the members, to establish schedules and orders of priority, to ask for assistance in orchestrating a program. The fiction is widely subscribed to in Congress that the party program it passes or fails to pass somehow determines each member's own electoral future. Yet the number of senators and representatives who actually run on the congressional record, who stand or fall on what Congress collectively does, must be exceedingly small. Even so, the piety of members toward their party responsibilities helps to ensure the passage of many bills.

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However necessary they are for the operation of democratic government, coalitions are somewhat unnatural constructs. They arise not out of the bedrock interests of people, but rather from their ability to calculate advantage over a protracted period, and to discern their best interests in the complexity of the political world. American coalition-forming institutions reveal the wisdom and ingenuity of constitution-makers, and reflect a political theory that explicitly attempted to balance the just claims of the political system as a whole with those of its constituent parts.

The natural elements of our political system, however, are factions. Factions organize interests, the felt needs of individuals thought capable of satisfaction by government. And in order to be more than just "interest groups," factions must exist through the party system, supplying a mass base, an ideological format, an organizational structure—or all three—for the expression of interests through party policy and party effort.

The grand sweep of American history has spawned a factional structure in each of the major parties that is extremely complex. Although in recent years some groups have voted overwhelmingly for one party (e.g., Jews for the party of Franklin Roosevelt, blacks against the party of Barry Goldwater), one can still find prominent members of most groups high in the counsels of both parties. Even under rules that reduce the pressure for coalitions, the habits of American politicians die hard, and all but the youngest of them have seen enough turns of the wheel to know how senseless it is to write off potential allies arbitrarily.

Nevertheless, the two parties do contain, broadly speaking, five factions and one anomaly. The Republican Party has always had two wings, one representing Main Street, the other, Wall Street. Vermont farmers and Ohio hardware-store owners are prototypical Main Street Republicans, thought to embody homely American virtues of self-reliance and frugality and therefore to oppose big government at home and entanglements abroad. Main Street Republicans are moralistic about politics, and disapprove of politicians as a breed. They view government as an intrusion upon the real business of life.

It is a sizeable jump from the cultural milieu of Norman Rockwell paintings that these people embody to the Museum of Modern Art—and the sophisticated, internationalist money-handlers and entrepreneurs who adopted the Republican Party because of its permissive—indeed, encouraging—view of economic development. For the last 35 years, Republicans have entertained observers of their presidential nomination politics with fights between these two wings of the party. Usually, the moderns have beaten the traditionalists, and their strongest candidates—Willkie, Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford—have invariably sought to neutralize conflict by somehow bridging the cultural gap. Candidates who have traded on or emphasized the gap—Dewey, Taft, Goldwater, Rockefeller—have suffered accordingly.

Over the years, the modernist wing has shrunk dangerously, and the party has found itself more and more in the hands of its most traditionalist—and frequently its most conservative—remnant. In an era of restricted suffrage, such a situation might barely be tenable. But as more groups of citizens organize to make their demands on government, and as government deploys itself to meet these demands and compel compliance throughout the private sector, the legatees of the Republican Party are likely to become increasingly alienated from practical politics, and less able to oppose Democrats effectively.

For this reason, the factional struggle within the Democratic Party demands our closest attention. The Democrats are the true weather vane of American politics: Where they point, the rest of the nation, willy-nilly, follows. And here, at least three factions and one significant anomaly emerge.

Since the consolidations of the Roosevelt-Truman years, all mainstream Democrats are, at least nominally, internationalists,

welfare-statists, and proponents of civil rights. It is the variations on these themes that cause the great conflicts within the party.

Contemporary internationalism was a response to the "lessons" of World War II, and to this day one finds in the rhetoric of some Democrats the expressed desire to prevent another Munich. The first great cleavage in the party is between these Munich-oriented internationalists and those who have learned their lessons from Vietnam. Those "lessons" are manifold. To some, no more Vietnams means no more land wars in Asia; to others it means no more commitments of U.S. troops anywhere abroad, at least for the time being. To some it means no more *Pax Americana*; to others, that all American activity overseas is morally tainted. To some it means better consultation with Congress before undertaking important actions in foreign policy; to others, a vast scaling-down of all unilateral foreign activity and increased reliance on such international organizations as the UN, whether these are friendly to U.S. interests (which are regarded as having dubious legitimacy in any event) or not.

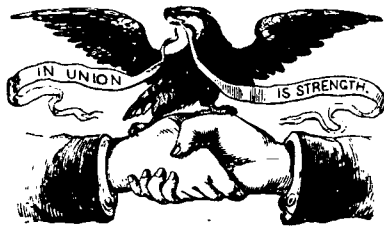
Many of the New Left critics of U.S. internationalism in the Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon years—who frequently subscribe to the more severe of these positions—have been active in Democratic politics, and have found allies among established Democratic politicians of national stature. This branch of the party emphasizes so-called "north-south" relations, and urges that American policy dissociate itself from U.S. business investment in nations where living standards are low or right-wing elites govern. At the same time this group de-emphasizes "east-west" relations: Rivalry with the USSR, the capacity of the Soviet Union to inflict unacceptable damage on the U.S., and the security of the U.S. "sphere of influence" in Western Europe are thought to be problems that have constrained the imaginations of U.S. policy-makers for too long.

On the issue of welfare there have been two major dissents from the Democratic mainstream. One, George Wallace's quasi-populist complaint about big government, welfare chiselers, and "pointy-headed bureaucrats," resonates rather well with the anti-Washington spirit of Jimmy Carter's campaign for the presidency. In the south these views have always coexisted with predilections for big armies, rural electrification, and farm price supports, hence the temptation to describe southern populism as an embodiment of the general resentments harbored by people on the geographic or social periphery. That these resentments find expression mostly through the Democratic Party, rather than a third party, testifies to the coalition-forming character of our electoral politics.

The second dissent from the welfare-statist Democratic mainstream is elitist in its origins, and is voiced by intellectuals dissatisfied with the results of New Deal-Great Society legislation. Today virtually all economists, including ardent Democrats, embrace the heresy that minimum wages contribute to unemployment. It was Charles Schultze, a liberal Democrat of impeccable credentials, who torpedoed the first Humphrey-Hawkins public-employment bill, on the grounds that it would quite likely be counterproductive.

A skeptical posture *vis-à-vis* social and economic legislation is generally a luxury that Democratic politicians do not permit themselves, and so the success of intellectuals in persuading them to share these misgivings will likely be mixed. The main force working in their favor is a growing perception that the national government is approaching an upper limit on the extent to which it can tax personal income, traditionally the main source of revenues. A consciousness of limits on the disposable income of government promotes an interest in cost-effectiveness, and so the good report of dispassionate analysts is likely to become one among many resources on which advocates of programs will come to rely.

Conflict within the Democratic Party extends even to civil rights. This is partly because the earlier goals of the party's mainstream have largely been reached. But as barriers to equal opportunity have come down, the spirit of amelioration has embraced a new



goal, sometimes described as equality of results. Until recently, keeping records of Americans according to their race or religion or national origin was discouraged or outlawed so as to prevent discrimination. Now, in many areas of national policy, this very practice is required so as to provide proof that adequate proportions of previously disadvantaged classes of people are represented.

Affirmative action in public policy has not been unanimously favored by Democrats. In particular, Jewish groups, for whom the memory of Nuremberg laws is still fresh, have broken from the mainstream movement toward "benign" quotas. Their chief recourse has been to the courts; in the counsels of the party their cause is, for the most part, lost.

Overall, the three main factions of the party divide as follows: "New Left" Democrats concern themselves mainly with the lessons of Vietnam, embrace affirmative action, and ignore the issues of the welfare state. Traditionalist Democrats with strong labor-union affiliations retain a keen interest in U.S.-Soviet rivalry and defend the welfare state against its critics, while displaying indifference or mild disapproval toward affirmative action. Wallaceites, a shrinking proportion of the party, never favored civil rights in any form, and regard affirmative action as merely another manifestation of the welfare state. In foreign affairs they are ritualistically anti-Soviet.

The great anomaly is Jimmy Carter, who is firmly allied with none of these factions. His nomination campaign strategy depended, not on mobilizing pre-existing factions within the party, but rather on steering a course between them, on making a strong showing with a personally organized following in early caucuses and primaries, thereby capturing the attention of the media, and on portraying himself as an anti-Wallace southerner, thereby enlisting the aid of southern black politicians.

By 1976, the rules of the game had made coalition-building among established politicians relatively unimportant, and Carter's strategy was enough to win the nomination. But it was not enough to resolve the factional conflicts within his party, or to supply him with a mandate to which a Democratic Congress felt obliged to respond. The President, evidently much to his surprise, has had to learn to build coalitions in Congress.

The factions President Carter must contend with in Congress more or less mirror the ideological map of the national party electorate. In recent years, Congress has decentralized its authority structure, giving more power to party caucuses, subcommittee chairmen, and rank-and-file committee members. As a result, the task of a President (or any lobbyist) has become far more complex. Instead of dealing with a handful of kingpins, presidents must now bargain with numerous influential members, each a leader of a committee or subcommittee, each holding a little piece of discretion over policy and therefore power.

There is also the institutional fact of bicameralism, a condition that runs far beyond constitutional formalities. The Senate is no somnolent upper chamber of aged notables, but rather a working body of elected politicians, eager for publicity, many of them alive with presidential ambitions, and well supplied with personal staffs and committee assignments that focus their appetites and energies.

The House, the far more structured and less individualistic chamber, has always exploited the advantage of numbers to divide labor and capture decision-making prerogatives through the expertise of its many specialist members. Recent reforms have, if anything, accentuated these institutional differences. The barons of the Senate have voted themselves armies of staff aides, whose careers depend on gaining for their principals the clout that requires interest-groups, national constituencies, and executive-branch bureaucrats to take account of them. The decentralizing reforms of the House have spread to larger numbers of members the opportunity to make their mark on one or another policy arena.

As Congress has decentralized, ideological symbols have acquired more importance as rallying points for coordination and leadership. When the House decreased the power of committee chairmen and increased the power of subcommittees and *their*

chairmen, it did so through the previously moribund party caucuses—especially on the Democratic side—and thus gave to their elected party leaders a set of leadership tools that had lain unused since the day of Joseph Gurney Cannon at the turn of the twentieth century. Today the Speaker and the party caucus enforce as a condition of committee leadership stricter norms of party loyalty—ideological tests—than have been institutionally possible since the advent of the seniority system around World War I.

The political preconditions of this turn of events were the emergence of a numerically dominant mainstream coalition in the congressional majority party, the Democrats, and the decline of the south in the Democratic congressional caucus. These are evidently consequences of reapportionment and of the growth of the Republican Party in the south.

Republicans in Congress divide much as they do in the electorate. Conservative Republicans include at least three regional groupings. Foremost among these are still the representatives of traditionalistic, "rock-ribbed" constituencies dominated by small and middle-sized towns and their rural hinterlands in the Midwest and, to a decreasing extent, along the margins of the east coast megalopolis. Gerald Ford represented one such constituency, Grand Rapids, Michigan, as did his two predecessors in the House Republican leadership, Charles Halleck of rural northern Indiana and Joseph W. Martin, Jr., of North Attleboro, Massachusetts. Ford's successor, John Rhodes of Arizona, like many of his constituents, was born and educated in the middle west, and moved as an adult to Phoenix. Throughout the southwest, as Rhodes illustrates, affluent retirees, ranchers, and the white, Anglo urban and suburban middle classes have sent Republicans to Congress. This has also been true in much of southern California, from San Diego through Santa Barbara. Meanwhile, in the south, mass migration and the consequent strain toward the nationalization of ideological perspectives has slowly transformed conservative Democratic congressional seats into conservative Republican ones. Perhaps the most startling example of this in recent years is the Mississippi Gulf Coast seat held for 40 years by a Democrat, William Colmer of Pascagoula. In 1972, on Colmer's retirement, his former administrative assistant, Trent Lott, won the seat as a Republican. There are now something like 25 Republican representatives who come from formerly Confederate states, three or four times the number of southern Republicans as late as a decade ago, and a sizeable component in the Republican caucus.

Liberal Republicans exist in Congress, but they do not flourish there; as a group they are small and uninfluential. To be embedded in a minority of a minority is painful for politicians of normal ambitions, and consequently some of the most ambitious Republican liberals—John Lindsay of New York, Donald Riegle of Michigan, Bradford Morse of Massachusetts—are examples—have left the House of Representatives for greener, or at least other, pastures. Two of them changed their party affiliations, a very rare event among political activists, and the third took a vow of political silence at the UN secretariat.

Other liberal Republicans, representing mostly "silk stocking" or affluent suburban or exurban constituencies, from the Berkshires of Massachusetts and Fairfield County in Connecticut to Palo Alto, California, hang on in Congress. Only one, the remarkable (but not excessively liberal) John Anderson of Rockford, Illinois, has gotten very far in the leadership of his party in the House, but he is unlikely ever to move up the ladder from the third position as Chairman of the House Republican Conference.

In recent Congresses, Democrats have outnumbered Republicans by sizeable majorities, sometimes by as much as two to one. So any President who means to pass laws must attend above all to the factions of the congressional Democratic Party. These can be distinguished in three ways: by region, by ideology, and by the nomination process that sent them to Congress.

In the south, those hundred-odd congressional districts that continue to elect Democrats are still mostly dominated by Wallaceite voters who are conservative on federal spending (except for

farm subsidies and military construction) and hostile to civil rights. But not all southern Democratic constituencies are obsessed with matters of race. Andrew Young, for example, represented an Atlanta district having more white than black voters.

The tradition of southern liberalism goes back a long way, especially in the poorer, rural areas that never supported plantations. Such areas produced Sam Rayburn and Wright Patman in Texas, James Trimble and William Fulbright in Arkansas, and Carl Elliott, Albert Rains, and Bob Jones in Alabama. When these are added to other districts dominated by urban working people (e.g., in Houston or New Orleans) or by northern migrants or underprivileged—especially Spanish-speaking—minorities (e.g., in South Florida or San Antonio), perhaps one-quarter of the southern Democratic districts are represented by liberal Democrats.

A little arithmetic reveals how time has worked against conservative southerners. So long as the parties were fairly evenly divided in Congress, the south made up nearly half of the Democratic caucus, and, in league with conservative (i.e., most) Republicans, could control legislation. This was the structure of the famous "Conservative Coalition" which dominated Congress from 1938 to the 1960s. But as the number of Democrats in Congress increased, the proportion of southern Democrats declined, since there were so few Republican southern seats to win. In fact the trend went the other way, and in the 1960s Republicans began to take over southern Democratic seats. By the 1970s, the southern conservative voice in the Democratic caucus has diminished sharply.

The uniformity of northern and western Democratic congressmen likewise disappears under scrutiny. Here, variations in the nomination process are crucial. In most of their voting behavior, northern and western Democratic congressmen have indistinguishably supported the New Deal, the labor movement, civil rights, and presidential leadership in foreign affairs. Yet some have led and others have lagged; some have provided intellectual leadership, tilted at windmills, eschewed temporary alliances with enemies, and some have not. In general, where strong party organizations control the nomination, congressmen show a strong "practical" streak, and tend to be followers rather than innovators in policy. Where the nomination is secured by self-starting, candidate-oriented organizations, congressmen incline to be more ideological, more entrepreneurial and experimental in policy, and less ready to compromise. These two groups—the urban, frequently ethnic, products of political machines, and the ideologically-liberal self-starters—do not always see eye to eye.

In the House the first group is frequently and incorrectly identified as big-city Democrats because Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York once provided its prototypical members. But there have been exceptions within most of these cities: Abner Mikva of Chicago and Paul Sarbanes and Barbara Mikulski of Baltimore are or were big-city congressmen but not big-city congressional types; and New York of late has spawned a whole raft of reform-oriented, machine-wrecking congressmen. Meanwhile, small communities like New Haven, Connecticut, and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, send pragmatic, main-line Democrats to Congress with great regularity.

After the landslide election of 1958, the liberal House Democrats expected to move their 20-year-old agenda of social reform swiftly through Congress. They instead met with frustration and failure. Out of this experience came an organization of liberal Democrats, the Democratic Study Group, which over the next 15 years helped to shift the Democratic congressional leadership away from a posture of acquiescence to the "Conservative Coalition" and toward a focus on New Deal-Fair Deal-New Frontier-Great Society programs. The leadership of Lyndon Johnson and the Democratic landslide of 1964 provided the necessary

ingredients—a friendly President and enough votes to win in committee, in caucus, and on the floor—for success.

The Vietnam war drove a wedge through the mainstream Democratic coalition: Organization congressmen remained loyal to Johnson while reformers and those without strong local party organizations grew disenchanted. Fortuitously, one of the few dovish congressional party regulars, Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts, found himself in line for Speaker when Carl Albert retired in 1976, thus holding out the promise of a renewed alliance between the two largest factions of the congressional Democratic Party.

Historically, alliances among these factions have been subject to continuous negotiation. In 1910-1911 a group of big-city Democrats sided with stand-pat Republican Speaker Joseph Cannon in his fight against the insurgent progressives of his own party. But the insurgents and the rest of the Democrats, led by Champ Clark of Missouri, were too numerous on that occasion. From 1938 to the 1960s, the "Conservative Coalition" was an extraordinarily successful long-term collaboration between Democrats and Republicans; in 1964 it broke down over an issue dear to southern Democrats when the Republicans deserted them to support the civil-rights bill. Traditionally, southerners would trade their votes on reclamation projects to pick up western support on procedural matters concerning civil-rights bills. In organizing the Democratic Party in the House, a countervailing alliance formed between southern moderates and northern party regulars, producing virtually all the leadership combinations of the last 40 years (Rayburn, Texas/McCormack, Mass., 1940-1961; McCormack/Albert, Okla., 1962-1970; Albert/O'Neill, 1972-1977; O'Neill/Wright, Texas, 1977-). The only exception was the short majority leadership of Hale Boggs, Louisiana, 1970-1972, in combination with Albert. Each time, however, these alliances have had to be renegotiated and ideological affinity has always been constrained by the inexorable discipline of numbers.

The history of coalition-formation in Congress demonstrates that successful congressional coalitions are by no means confined within party lines, and that they are based on calculations of factional interest no less astute than those which inform the alignments that produce presidential nominees. But owing to the different institutional constraints on each set of factions, presidential and congressional coalitions, even when dominated by the same party, are bound to differ in composition and thus in their priorities.

Recent reforms of the presidential nominating process will doubtless accentuate these differences by further divorcing Democratic presidential nominees from the party organizations that nominate congressmen. Of course, the ability and willingness of congressional Democrats to apply simple ideological tests to their leaders work in a conciliatory direction. But the long-run capacity of the Congress and President to work well together, at least under Democratic auspices, depends chiefly upon: (1) the maintenance of the coalition within Congress between the program-oriented, liberal-on-principle, independently-nominated faction of the party and the moderate, pragmatic, party-organization-nominated faction; (2) the election or reelection of a sufficient number of Democrats in each group to defeat any resurgence of the "Conservative Coalition"; and (3) the willingness of the President, whose route to power differs so much from that of his congressional allies, to devise his goals and shape his rhetoric so as to respond to the political constraints with which congressmen must grapple.

Elizabeth Drew recently remarked that Jimmy Carter had said so often that he owed his election to nobody, that nobody on Capitol Hill felt he owed anything to Jimmy Carter. Only a conscious and concerted effort is likely to overcome this emerging weakness of our institutions to sustain a coalition in the nation's majority party that can govern successfully. □



CAPITOL IDEAS

by
Tom Bethell



Stoolies/*Art Moderne*/Bond: Senator for the 60s

The national mood of self-abasement is far from being exhausted, to judge by recent events in Washington. One might mention as a glaring example the White House's toleration, even encouragement, of UN Ambassador Andrew Young, whose recent pronouncements about America would in an earlier and more upright time have been regarded as coming from a kook, if not a traitor. And he is not the only termite nibbling away at the national heart. I would be inclined to agree with William Safire that an American Kim Philby is likely soon to surface were it not for the fact that it is now only too easy to enjoy one's Marxist convictions and express one's anti-American attitudes at a safe distance from the Kremlin. Why go to Moscow, as Philby did, when constitutional protections, and even government jobs, are offered to those who loudly proclaim their dissatisfaction with America? No, on balance the vistas of the State Department are more reassuring than the uncertainties of Kremlin corridors. Besides, as the termites have discovered, State's precincts are panelled in wood of a most edible variety. The Kremlin, by all reports, is built of stone.

Other recent developments, at a much more frivolous level, are worth a comment. Take the Carter administration's absurd preoccupation with "whistle-blowers" in government. A whistle-blower is someone who publicly discloses government decisions or behavior that he regards as insufficiently virtuous. That is, he is inclined to put morality before loyalty. President Carter is very anxious to proffer some kind of statutory immunity to disloyal employees, and his administration is collectively stupid enough not to have questioned his inclination. It might have occurred to Carter, for example, that Richard Nixon

had his whistle-blowers—lots of them. The White House people might have had second thoughts when some whistle-blower legislation working its way through House committees was suddenly and unexpectedly unanimously approved by Republican committee members, who undoubtedly relish the prospect of a leaky administration.

Carter has also been working toward the (admirable) goal of making it easier to fire government employees. But he will no doubt find that an employee, about to be fired, will publicly reveal some damaging tidbit about his boss (it is easy enough for any employee to come across this kind of thing) and thereby acquire immunity from firing because he now wears the halo of whistle-blower. Of course the great problem with encouraging moral stands in government is that there is no longer any general agreement as to what "moral" means, especially with moral relativism getting such a big boost from people like the President's sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton.

Then there is the curious matter of government-paid legal fees, which has attracted so little attention in the press. The federal government is now paying people to sue it—an illustration of national dementia if there ever was one. The Federal Trade Commission, for example, pays out \$500,000 a year in legal fees to those "public interest" groups who "participate" in its proceedings. A prominent beneficiary of this strange government policy has been Americans for Democratic Action, which has received about \$150,000 in this way from the government so far this year. One used to think of ADA as a political group supported by dues-paying liberals. ADA's membership has been sagging (*ADA World*, distributed to all ADA members, only has a press-run of 20,000), however, so now the organization apparently is in the process of switching over to the more lucrative public-interest law field in which

one can win government "contracts" by the simple expedient of suing the government. (ADA's legal fees resulted from its participation in proceedings dealing with the funeral industry, antacids, over-the-counter drugs, ophthalmic goods, and health spas, all of which seems like a curious departure for the organization which started out 31 years ago as an anti-Communist group bent on defeating Henry Wallace's Progressive Party.)

The point is that agencies like the FTC already do represent the "public interest." Inviting outside groups to participate in their decision-making is in reality an expression of irritation at the fact that the voice of regulated industry is a legitimate component of the public interest, and therefore an attempt is now underway to drown out industry's voice by enlarging the rival chorus of "public interest"—i.e., anti-capitalist—voices.

One of my favorite spots in Washington is Gravelly Point, a small park located a couple of hundred yards north of the main runway of National Airport. You sit there on the grass and these huge jets come lumbering, then racing down the runway straight at you, straining and roaring, with noses tilted upward, at the difficulty of getting off the ground, and finally ripping the atmosphere with a stupendous sound as they slice their way not very many feet over your head.

This is quite a popular entertainment of a Sunday afternoon. The parking lot is always filled with cars and campers, the grass dotted with picnickers. Why it is allowed at all is to me one of the great mysteries of Washington. No doubt there is a plausible claim to danger and therefore an opportunity for one or another arm of government to step in officiously. But to date none has, and so it is possible to get a marvelous close-up of these big aircraft in motion. The thought crossed my mind the

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last time I was there that a trip to Gravelly Point was in every way more profitable than going to a museum of modern art.

It is, surely, an obvious truth of our time—but equally, by tacit agreement, one that is rarely mentioned in polite society—that the creative impulse of man became side-tracked at some point early in this century, away from some of its normal channels and into new ones associated with engineering and technology. It requires only a modicum of honesty to recognize that a DC-10, or a Boeing 747, is more impressive aesthetically (and in every other way) than most of what passes for “art” in our contemporary museums. As Vladimir Nabokov so well put it, these tend to be receptacles for “crankshaft cretins of stainless steel, zen stereos, polystyrene stinkbirds, *objets trouvés* in latrines....” In recognition of the unspoken aesthetic of our time, many modern artists and sculptors pay a kind of pathetic homage to technology, as Nabokov here recognizes.

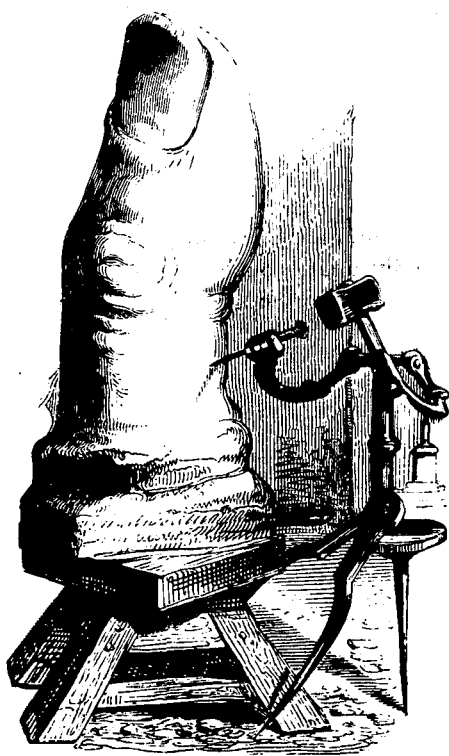
Bearing this in mind, I decided to pay a visit to the brand new East Building of the National Gallery of Art close to the foot of Capitol Hill. This trapezoid-shaped, I.M. Pei-designed, marble marvel has been gushed over so many times in the press in recent weeks that you will not hear any further praise from me. At the entrance is a large slab of smooth bronze, apparently shaped by centuries of exposure to the elements—perhaps having been retrieved from the foot of a waterfall. Wrong—I should have said the foundry of Henry Moore, as a catalogue provided to visitors usefully “explains.”

Inside one enters a great open space with glass ceiling, indoor trees and plants, escalators, and not a painting in sight, although there is a cretinous crankshaft or two, and, suspended from a wall, what appears to be the exploded innards of a town-hall clock, but turns out to be “by” someone called Anthony Caro who must take himself very seriously indeed. The museum space is in fact a perfect place for giving large cocktail parties, complete with “talking points” such as a giant Calder mobile suspended from the ceiling in a style clearly derivative of the Air and Space Museum across the Mall, where it is possible to see Lindbergh’s plane, and others, similarly suspended. Not surprisingly, the new East Wing has already been used to give large cocktail parties, attended inevitably by the likes of Jackie Onassis and Andy Warhol.

I asked an attendant where the art was. Upstairs, she told me irritably. I trudged upstairs, past an enormous and really revolting canvas 13 yards long, consisting of nothing but ugly splotches of black paint, and portentously entitled “Reconciliation Elegy.” (The dauber, whoever he is, must be a very good salesman.) Then I entered a room containing pieces of sculpture by one David Smith, apparently a terribly important figure in the history of art,

who went to some abandoned factories in Italy where “he found numerous sheets of steel, as well as tools and factory machinery which he incorporated into his sculpture. The rate at which Smith produced finished compositions while at Voltri was unprecedented in the history of sculpture...” (says an explanatory text on the wall).

This rapidity may be explained by the fact that in Smith’s hands sculpture has been reduced to pieces of metal which imitate what may have once been found in a blacksmith’s shop. These sculptures are, like Calder’s mobiles, merely whimsical parodies of technology. I think this im-



presses some people because the “artist” seems to be adopting a superior attitude to technology, rather in the manner of the impoverished aristocrat who manages to reassure himself that he is altogether finer than the uncultured *nouveaux riches* who press ever closer to his dilapidated castle.

Down the hall was an utterly clownish exhibition called “The Subjects of the Artist,” intended “as a *preliminary investigation* into the themes and subjects in abstract expressionism.” (My italics. Note, again, the aping of science.) The exhibition consisted of a few rooms of paintings by De Kooning, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Robert Motherwell. What amused me were the photographs of these gentlemen sitting in solemn contemplation of their incomplete canvases—pondering, you are given to understand, a

“problem” much as Einstein did. In the Rothko room (audacious nonsense—a series of horizontally-divided, two-tone canvases of no conceivable meaning or interest beyond that of charlatanry), people were intimidated into whispering. In the Barnett Newman room, readers of Tom Wolfe’s *The Painted Word* will be amused to learn, viewers were not looking at the canvases (blank except for an occasional vertical stripe), but were reading a prominently displayed “explanation” of them.

It is worth noting that the original National Gallery was built at the expense of Andrew Mellon, and this addition to it at the expense of his son, Paul Mellon. One is impressed that so much money has remained in private hands. But beyond that, the new building strikes me as being a waste of money. Andrew Mellon’s construction of the National Gallery was a genuinely useful, democratic act of philanthropy, but Paul Mellon’s building, when the pretension is stripped away, is primarily for the benefit of the Art Crowd, who could easily have held their cocktail parties elsewhere. Mr. Mellon would have done better to have invested his money in a steel mill, or perhaps an airplane factory.

Now comes the District of Columbia voting-rights amendment—a matter of “elementary human rights,” as the *Washington Post* urged senators on the morning of the vote. One hears much about how tough life is in Washington these days. Just as in the Soviet Union and Cambodia there are human-rights problems, so we in Washington have them too—notably no senators to vote for. Admittedly, Washington is the wealthiest city in the country, courtesy of the taxpayers, and receives many other benefits as a result of the government’s presence, but we cannot be expected to enjoy these fruits without voting rights.

One trusts that the tax-paying stick-dwellers (as Americans are thought of in Washington) will not be duped by this latest lie about “human rights.” The state of Gimme-More will *get* more if this amendment passes—and as President Carter’s futile attempts to reform the Civil Service system have shown, federal workers already have far too much influence on Capitol Hill.

This amendment has, incidentally, ushered in a deliciously piquant development, concerning the well-known Georgia legislator Julian Bond, who is generally held to be a public figure of such shining virtue that only an oversight can explain the Vatican’s failure to have canonized him. Others, to be sure, regard him as a slick opportunist, but they are most decidedly in the minority.

Julian Bond is above all else a media creation. It will be recalled that he first entered the public consciousness during the 1968 Democratic Convention, when an

attempt was made to nominate him for vice president even though he was seven years too young for the job. But he was on television briefly and everyone remarked how boyish and clean-limbed he was. Thereafter he became a member in good standing of the Quote Circuit. Was there a riot in Birmingham? A "New South" governor in Florida? An editor in New York would need a quote from an authority in the South, and Bond became everyone's authority, his name reliably appearing on every reporter's Rolodex.

Initially famous for being on TV, Bond maintained his fame by being quoted. He set forth on the lecture circuit and so increased his fame—and wealth. The country was in a parlous state, Bond opined for the benefit of students.

Then came Jimmy Carter, a former governor who decided that he would like to be President. Against all odds, he succeeded. Now you would have thought that Bond, a black politician from Carter's state, would somehow have been able to capitalize on this achievement, and that having done so he would today be rivalling Andrew Young himself in the prominence and virulence of his denunciations of America. On the contrary, a study of news

media reports in 1976 reveals that Bond actually used his Quote Circuit authority to predict that Carter was going nowhere, and so was in fact partially responsible for the news media's early disinclination to believe that Carter was a serious candidate. One is inclined to believe from this episode that Bond must be uncommonly stupid, politically speaking, but Elizabeth Drew, in her book on the 1976 campaign, offers an alternative explanation. She says that Carter believes Bond did not approve of his candidacy because he, Bond, wanted to be vice president, but realized that an all-Georgia ticket was untenable. Thus he attempted to undermine Carter's campaign. In any event, there is no doubt that a fuller account of the Bond-Carter story would make for entertaining reading. (What, I wonder, does David Broder of the *Washington Post* make of it? In 1975 Broder visited 12 states, not including Georgia, in search of probable presidential candidates. Does one see here the invisible hand of Bond?)

With the D.C. voting-rights amendment approved at last on Capitol Hill, Julian Bond displayed both his opportunism and his characteristic lack of political acumen. "I have always wanted to be a U.S.

senator!" he proclaimed, adding that he was now giving serious consideration to moving to D.C. so that he could qualify as a resident. It strikes me that Bond possibly believes the human-rights rhetoric and so has a vision of black Washington consisting of tired, hungry, yearning masses, huddled on doorsteps, straining for a first glimpse of their new leader—who will be none other than Bond himself.

What Bond doesn't seem to realize is that Washington already has plenty of black leaders, and they are already sitting around the banquet table, napkins tucked under their chins, knives and forks gripped firmly in each hand, awaiting with slaver-ing impatience the feast (Senate seats, House seats or seat) that is about to be placed in front of them. And now, just before the first course is brought in from the kitchen, fresh-faced, clean-limbed Bond appears in the doorway and cries out: "Huddled masses! Follow me to the bright new city on the Hill! I shall lead you to victory!"

Well, it is not too difficult to visualize the next scene. If Bond does indeed come to Washington, there will be a slight alteration in the menu, that's all. New first course: Roast Bond. □

John Nollson

Aspen: The New Rome

I remember well how our current condition of peace, prosperity, and happiness originated in the political malaise of 1978. In those days, we didn't understand the sources of our discontent. Now, of course, we know better. This very week, we're celebrating another anniversary of our *Fundamental Statute* which, not a moment too soon, vested all legislative, executive, and judicial power in the Executive Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies.

It had been a startling development, quite unexpected. Even hardheaded wargamers had overlooked the growing influence of The Institute, especially after its famous seminar, "Creative Necrology and Preemptive Bioethics," had opened sectarian fissures. The future of structural humanism seemed to hang in the balance. All the more remarkable, then, was The Institute's continued rise to its position of preeminent World Power.

It was managed with consummate skill. The Executive Secretary was a retiring man who had begun with skimpy resources: two bamboo ski poles, some

frayed bindings, a pair of shabby boots, a rickety chairlift, a small A-frame in Colorado—small, yet well-stocked with the Great Books of the Western (and the Eastern and Southern and Northern and Under) World. But he had vision and unshakeable self-confidence.

"I never had any doubts," the Executive Secretary said when he announced that he would rule with the title of Humanist-General. And he gestured to the enormous oil portrait on the wall of his study. It was Mortimer Adler. "That's my first seminarist painted on the wall, looking as if he were alive. Will't please you to sit and look at him?" he would say to all first-time visitors. But it was the Humanist-General whose earnest glance showed depth and passion.

Later on, the Humanist-General could talk calmly of the sensational scandal that had almost sidetracked him. That was the huge commotion caused by the leaking of The Institute's famous ten-year plan, *The Protocols of the Elders of Aspen*. Written in Esperanto and containing a preface signed in a near-illegible scrawl (thought

to be that of Wendell Willkie), the *Protocols* created a near panic.

Well they might have. The document was nothing less than a detailed blueprint for the seizure of world power, for the establishment of a new super-government on the ruins of the world system. "Naturally, we had to denounce it as a forgery and launch a massive public relations counterattack. It was a trying period, the greatest challenge to our doctrine of creative non-momentous philology. I recall that I was chairing our international seminar on the life of Paramahansa Yogananda and its implications for landscape architecture when the story broke. Premature disclosure could have wiped out thirty years of hard work. But I didn't panic.

"I had been against drawing up the *Protocols* from the beginning," continued the Humanist-General with an ever-so-slight Colorado drawl. "We didn't need a turgid text. Maybe our plans seemed a little advanced for their day, but it surely has worked out all right. Besides, everyone knew—or should have known—what we

were doing. We had open meetings; we had our own airstrip to receive visitors; we spoke on National Public Radio; we made records for the blind and movies for the deaf. Everyone who was anyone came to our place in the mountains. Then we bought some seaside villas and they came there. Then they came to our townhouses, our campgrounds, our trailer parks, and our houseboats. It was only a matter of time until all segments of American society would be educated, organized, and directed by The Institute."

He said this during his first televised interview with Barbara Walters, and he made known his resolve to use his extraordinary powers with dignity, grace, and restraint. "You know," he said to Miss Walters, "sometimes up in the mountains, after a hard day of grappling with the complex issues of our variegated culture, it's nice to sit around the campfire, relax, and maybe even sing a song or two." And with that, he reached for his guitar, and sang his now-legendary theme song, with its haunting refrain:

(To the tune of "Rocky Mountain High")

In the Colorado Rockies bye and bye
On pungent globalism we'll get high
We'll teach you how things came to be
So you'll never have to wonder why
Aspen's mountain high

In the Colorado Rockies it's no lie
We've seen it raining insights from the sky
Where things are just as plain as day
So the CIA need never spy
Aspen's mountain high

The past years have shown him as good as his word. Even bitter-enders who resisted the ascendancy of The Institute are now among the first to acknowledge that he was right from the start, and not a bit fuzzy on the issues.

For who among the leading journalists and commentators had not been present at one or another Aspen seminar, high in the mountains? Was there a major corporate executive who had not been ferried in his Lear jet to delve into the necessary nexus between commerce and theologies? Who had not heard that Pascal's Wager had become the Planetary Bargain? Whose aesthetic sense had not been refined after hearing The Institute's own musicians perform eight-, ten-, twelve-, and fourteen-tone music?

And then there were the diplomats and financiers, politicians and professors, who had willingly confided the most intimate details of their lives to the Aspen Institute Oral History Project. None had suspected that this would become the basis for the notorious Aspen Dossiers.

Then The Institute began to coin its own money by special arrangement with the Franklin Mint of Philadelphia. The Aspenrand, as the coin came to be known, was

backed by the staggering silver lode of The Institute's Colorado mines. Inevitably, the Aspenrand became a rock of stability in an era of wild monetary fluctuation. The Gnomes of Zurich (actually the collateral branch of the famous family led by Herman and Isidore Gnome) were also drawn into The Institute's orbit. Together, they became the most powerful currency manipulators of the twentieth century.

In truth, the Executive Secretary had not been a creative economist. Instead, his forte was foreign policy, which allowed his imaginative genius free rein. He established affiliates in all the great capitals of Europe and Asia; he opened wholly-owned subsidiaries throughout Africa and Latin America; he maintained tax shelters in New Hebrides and Barbados; he subscribed to *Le Monde*. With this extensive network of listening posts, he gathered startlingly accurate intelligence. His pre-



dictions of earthquakes and oil prices were uncanny. Fortunes were made and lost on the basis of information he provided. Governments urged him to take over management of their dwindling foreign exchange holdings. In a brilliant *coup de main*, he obtained observer status for The Institute at the United Nations General Assembly—which then adopted by a vote of 116-9 (12 abstentions, 11 missing-in-action) a resolution declaring The Institute "the sole legitimate representative of struggling optimists, rationalists, monetarists, and other oppressed peoples."

Meantime, it became necessary to create Aspen Security Forces to protect The Institute's worldwide chain of facilities. ASFO, as the armed component was known, soon numbered more than 800,000, including naval and air elements. The authoritative Institute of Strategic Studies in London reported that ASFO had become the fourth-largest standing military force in the world.

"You see," said the Humanist-General, "I knew what I was doing."

Anyone who has read up on the Portrait Gallery Crisis can hardly deny it! The neutralization of The Institute's *real* rivals for global hegemony had required a series of dazzling maneuvers. "The key to it was my strategy of unite and conquer. I secured the merger of the Brookings Institution with the American Enterprise Institute, thereby allowing two potential rivals to bore each other to death. Then—and this was a masterstroke—I arranged for the Smithsonian Institution to absorb the surviving remnants, thereby creating a new organization, Smithbrook American. I, for one, had never underestimated the Smithsonian; I knew it was much more than the bag of old dinosaur bones it pretended to be. It was on the move. But it never got deeply enough into foreign policy and, like the dinosaurs, its brain got too small for its body."

A characteristic understatement about the epic struggle between The Institute and Smithbrook American for control of the Northern Hemisphere! The Thirty Years' War was a toddler's scuffle by comparison. What began as a simple request by The Institute to purchase the subscription list of *Smithsonian* magazine erupted into bloody battle. But the outcome was never in doubt. The Humanist-General made mincemeat of the Curator-General.

"Finally, we were where we wanted to be," the victor would later say, "*mano y mano* with the Trilateral Commission, just the two of us, eyeball to eyeball, in the great game for all the marbles—and they blinked. Then they shuddered; then they trembled; then they began to shake uncontrollably. In the end, they collapsed completely."

How had it happened? The Colorado Coup, as it came to be known, was really an anti-climactic letdown after all those years of combat. The Trilateral Commission, already a quadralateral one in everything but name, had decided to skip stage five, and move directly toward its first Hexagonal Conference. But it made the mistake of renting The Institute's lodge for the occasion. "Singularly naive of them to think we would honor a flag of truce so that they might have their triennial septagonal seminar," chuckled the Humanist-General. "ASFO just rounded them up, and that was that. Frankly, I never did have much respect for the Trilaterals; no one ever named a station wagon after them."

No matter. The Humanist-General triumphed and he has since created a sense of order, serenity, and well-being unknown since the Era of Good Feeling. The vision of the Elders of Aspen has become a living reality. Throughout the world, people are coming to comprehend the connectedness of things. They are united in genuine awe of human intellectual and material achievement. They have come together. And they will make the critical choices. □

THE TALKIES

by
Ben Yagoda



Who'll Stop the Rain and Days of Heaven

Writing in the current issue of *Horizon* magazine, critic John Simon complains that American movies—unlike European ones—are almost uniformly “naive, nostalgic, simplistic, escapist, trendy, stereotyped, infantile, unreal.” He develops this argument at some length, and he has a point. Compared to their European counterparts, the products of Hollywood often seem unbearably crude, devoted less to truth and art than to the platitude and the cheap thrill. But Simon ignores, I think, two important considerations: first, that the American way of filmmaking has some peculiar virtues, which are simply not available to Europeans; and second, that there are deep-seated cultural reasons for the predicament of American movies, and it is nearly impossible for even the most sensitive of *auteurs* to overcome them.

Two current native products are cases in point. In *Who'll Stop the Rain*, director Karel Reisz plays to the strengths of the American cinema, with generally effective results; *Days of Heaven*, written and directed by Terrence Malick, shows what can happen when an American tries to make a film in the European, artistically “honest,” mode.

Based on Robert Stone's novel *Dog Soldiers* and set in the early seventies, *Rain* begins in Vietnam. John Converse (Michael Moriarty), an American correspondent whose moral sense has been numbed by the horrors of the war, agrees to participate in a heroin-smuggling plan. He enlists Ray Hicks (Nick Nolte), an old Marine buddy, to take the stuff to his wife, Marge (Tuesday Weld), in Berkeley. But while Hicks is making the delivery, trouble hits. The buyers, who turn out to be crooked narcs, try to rip off the heroin; Hicks and Marge take it and flee, with the authorities in pursuit; and everyone—including Converse—gets together for an apocalyptic shootout at a New Mexico mountain hideaway.

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Rain is essentially a melodrama, a form Reisz recently defined as “drama in which people express themselves in action rather than words.” Americans have put out better melodramas than anyone, as the *Cahiers du Cinéma* crowd recognized by choosing as its heroes directors like Howard Hawks, Samuel Fuller, and Nicholas Ray. This film is as taut and exciting as anything in that tradition. The lines of motivation, complicity, and reaction are clearly drawn; the two-kilo sack of skag is the perfect Hitchcockian McGuffin; there are virtually no narrative dead spots; and the two main action sequences—the Berkeley confrontation and the climax—are flawlessly put together.

But the film is after more than thrills. Both *Dog Soldiers* and Stone's other novel, *A Hall of Mirrors*, are informed by a conception of society in which everyone with power—whether a “good” or a “bad” guy—is in collusion, and the unconnected soul hasn't a prayer. Thus in *Dog Soldiers*—and in *Rain*, which was co-scripted by Stone and Judith Rascoe—the sadistic cops (brilliantly portrayed by Anthony Zerbe, Richard Masur, and Ray Sharkey) are part of a chain of influence that stops we know not where. The vision may be paranoid and conspiratorial, but it is an excellent literary fulcrum: Individual characters must either accept the state of affairs (and survive) or fight it (and die).

In *Who'll Stop the Rain*, the focus is on Hicks, who, in the hands of Nolte and Reisz, becomes a classic American adventure hero. A devotee of Nietzsche, Zen, and *tai chi*, Hicks has been waiting years for this chance to resist the forces of power—his Land Rover, hideouts, contacts, and ammunition are all ready. It's a suicide mission that he could have avoided by simply giving up the dope, but as he tells Marge, “All my life I've been f---ed around by morons,” and he won't have any more of it. Hicks, alternately witty, mindlessly violent, and sentimental (“They've got my buddy,” he says at the end), is a perfect creature of the screen: He craves

and is defined by action. And Nolte's performance will endure; his Hicks commands our complete attention.

When the film gets too ambitious, however, it is less successful. It shares with *Dog Soldiers* a metaphorical structure that takes Vietnam and heroin, in various ways, as symbols for America in the seventies. This works well enough when it is only suggested, but it cannot bear much weight. In particular, the opening, in which Converse makes his decision, is a bust. By showing Vietnam gore in horrific slow motion, Reisz uncritically accepts Converse's questionable point of view. (“I have no more morals to draw from all this cheap death,” he writes Marge, “so I've taken action.”) It's a perfect manifestation of the limitations of American-style movies. In *Dog Soldiers*, Converse's move is treated ironically; Stone implies, moreover, that it is less a clearly thought-out act than merely something to do. The logic of Hollywood, though, demands consistent characters and *reasons* for behavior, with the inevitable result being oversimplification.

Days of Heaven shuns the logic of Hollywood. We aren't told why the lovers Bill and Abby (Richard Gere and Brooke Adams) pose as brother and sister as they journey to work in the Texas wheatfields in 1916; why the Owner of the farm (Sam Shepard, the playwright) lives all alone in a ragtag Victorian house that sticks up out of the flat landscape; or why Abby agrees to Bill's plan that she accept the marriage proposal of the Owner, who, they believe, has only a few months to live. As in Malick's only previous film, *Badlands* (1973), motivation and background may be inferred by us, but they are not spelled out—least of all by the characters themselves, who are almost aggressively inarticulate.

This cool strategy succeeds in avoiding the traditional Hollywood pitfalls—the eight kinds of sentimentality and obtuseness abhorred by Simon. Indeed, it affords a credible conception of a footloose

America. Malick shows what Tocqueville must have meant when he described a land where "the woof of time is every instant broken and the track of generations effaced." Bill, Abby, and the Owner (and the farm workers, who form the only other society in the film) are severed from the past and from each other in precisely this way; if they can't speak, it's because they haven't been given a language. Considering this Texas world apart as an emblem for the country itself, one can easily see why no American filmmaker is up to Simon's standards. The shared meanings and social traditions that make his beloved European subtlety and irony possible just aren't there: In America, there are no assumptions—it's always necessary to start anew.

Unfortunately, a cinematic representation of this condition does not necessarily make for a satisfying film, and *Days of Heaven* is less than satisfying. Watching it, we yearn to empathize, to identify; all we

get are long pauses, vague Biblical overtones, and achingly beautiful long shots of the Texas plains. The central trio cannot help remaining enigmas, given Malick's reticence. Malick is so determined not to succumb to melodrama that he eliminates any possible drama from the film. In the "climactic" scene, for example, where Bill is chased by the police (he has killed the Owner), he has absolutely no hope of making it. What is more, there is no reason for us to feel anything when he is shot.

Since Malick's hands-off approach extends to the narrative, we need the voice-over narration of Linda (Linda Manz), Bill's 12-year-old sister, to know what's going on. Although occasionally a bit precious, the device generally works well. The irony distilled from innocence (c.f., *Huck Finn*) suits Malick's detachment, and Linda's point of view—remarkably morbid and metaphysical—is genuinely interesting and affecting.

There are other reasons for seeing *Days of Heaven*. In place of human concerns, Malick and cinematographers Nestor Almendros and Haskell Wexler have concentrated on the changing natural world, often to magnificent effect. There is, at the same time, a fascinating secondary motif consisting simply of the many machines that work their way into the story. One magical scene, where a train carrying President Wilson rides through the farm at night, opens up to us and the characters a world of possibilities beyond Texas. And at a few moments (most of them wordless close-ups), the characters manage to break through their icy masks and come alive.

For the most part, though, *Days of Heaven* is hollow. We see what Malick means, and may applaud him for forswearing the sins of the American cinema, but he has not come up with enough to take their place. Until he does, his *via negativa* will prove a one-way street. □

THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

by
Douglas Bartholomew



Fraunces' Tavern and the Spirits of '76

With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable....I cannot come to each of you, but shall feel obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand.

—General George Washington
A Farewell to His Troops
December 4, 1783
Fraunces Tavern

It is fitting that it began here and ended here, for all great saloons are revolutionary places—within them the mind is easily induced to fermentation upon whatever imperious cause is at hand, be it George III or Jimmy Carter. Such a saloon is Fraunces Tavern, the oldest building in Manhattan and the most historic pub in the United States today.

It was in Fraunces Tavern, in fact, that the history of the United States began. On

May 14, 1774, a group of angry merchants assembled in the tavern's upstairs Long Room to discuss the closing of the Port of Boston. There, amidst a great clinking of glasses full of Madeira and port, they appointed the Committee of Fifty that drafted the proposal to unite the Colonies and led to the formation of the First Continental Congress.

It was here, too, that glasses were raised signalling the end of the War of the Revolution. On December 4, 1783, in the Long Room, General Washington gave a moving farewell to his men before embarking for Annapolis to resign his commission.

And it was here that the New York Chamber of Commerce and the New York Yacht Club were founded (in 1768 and 1844); and here that the State Department (then known unpretentiously as the Department of Foreign Affairs) met under Jefferson; that Presidents Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Harding, Hoover, Eisenhower, and Nixon ate and imbibed; that a shell from a British ship once came

crashing through the roof; and here that, just three years ago, Puerto Rican nationalists planted a bomb that took the lives of four people and injured 44 others.

It is here, too, that I consumed my first "Washington Cocktail"—a tangy Jamaican fruit drink spiked with dark rum, gin, and Cointreau that works quite well despite its highly suspect rum-gin mix—in addition to untold quantities of Beck's beer, the latter allaying my fears that the Puerto Ricans might return while providing valuable insight concerning the military strategy of the Hessians following General Washington's famed crossing of the Delaware in 1776.

Don't get me wrong; it's not that I'm an *aficionado* of Beck's. It's just that Beck's enjoys some mysterious, Perrier-like status with Fraunces' current proprietor, Mr. Robert Norden, and it's all you're likely to wheedle out of the tavern's bartenders, who think the word "beer" is synonymous with "Beck's" (it is not).

No matter, for at Fraunces, where the

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men—bankers, brokers, engineers, lawyers, teachers—strut about in coats and ties and the ladies swaddle themselves in suedes or furs, it's somewhat impolitic to ask for beer anyway. True, there are the first-time visitors who come merely to swill a beer or two and look the place over; they usually sit or stand at the long L-shaped bar, nibble at the free cheese and crackers and hors d'oeuvres placed atop it, and inspect the decor—the Lord Dunsmore paintings, the old swords, the scores of colonial flags, and the imposing head of a buffalo whose tender flesh, I am told, tasted like filet mignon and was a popular addition to the menu a few years back.

But the truly sophisticated Fraunces habitués know better. They sip generous double martinis or Manhattans or Bloody Marys (superb here) while perusing a menu offering such original colonial delights as Baked Chicken à la Washington (chunks of chicken and mushrooms baked in a delicate cream sauce, said to be the General's favorite), Yankee Pot Roast, and Apple Cake Monticello. All in all, the Fraunces Tavern of today is a genteel place, a cool, dark, spacious hideaway on the extreme tip of lower Manhattan where well-heeled Wall Streeters (and occasionally their secretaries) come for a quick, relaxed business lunch or, in tavernkeeper Norden's words, "to have a shooter or two before going home." (A "shooter," Norden confides, is the American equivalent of the English "pop," if you know what that means.)

Located at Broad and Pearl Streets in the financial district, Fraunces is but a seaman's stroll downtown from the stately, pillared facade of the New York Stock Exchange. A colonnaded, four-story, yellow brick structure, Fraunces stands not alone, but is part of an island of 18th- and 19th-century buildings dwarfed by the neighboring office towers that comprise the dramatic skyline of New York. It is a picturesque, if physically intimidated, little block whose only latter-day intruders are Ciro's Pizza two doors down on Pearl and, next to it, as if clinging parasitically to the block's midsection, an OTB. (For the uninitiated, that's Off-Track Betting, whose branch offices are as ubiquitous along the mean streets of Manhattan as pretzel vendors, porn, and carbon monoxide.)

Architecturally, Fraunces' history has been as turbulent as its political heritage. Constructed in 1719 on what was originally a "water lot" and later became the city's first landfill, the Georgian-style building was considered one of the finest of its day and served as the residence of Stephen DeLancey, the merchant son-in-law of Stephanus Van Cortlandt, the third mayor of New York. Built with yellow bricks brought over as ballast on Dutch ships, the building could hardly be said to have been frangible, and to this adamant composition it no doubt owes its existence today,

having survived the great fires of 1777, 1832, 1837, and 1854 that destroyed most of the city.

Fraunces was purchased by the Sons of the Revolution in 1905 and completely restored two years later, prompting considerable criticism from so-called scholars of the day who issued the canard that the finished product bore little resemblance to the Fraunces Tavern of Washington's day.

It suffered no more damage from fires in this century, but its more recent years have not been so halcyon as one might expect. The controversy surrounding the 1907 restoration by architect William Mercereau (who imported from Holland yellow bricks of the type used in the original construction) continued to smolder into the 1960s. When the building was proclaimed an official landmark of the city in 1965, a purblind architecture critic for a major New York newspaper assailed its claim to landmarkdom. Without providing so much as a single fact to support her thesis, she decided it was "an unarcheological [sic]



fake" which "gives schoolchildren a fair idea of what a Georgian building looked like and gives local businessmen a fair lunch...but is not old, not authentic, and not preservation." It was, of course, a fusillade of sheer calumny, since in point of fact, some 25 percent of the building today is the original brick and timber that somehow survived two centuries of shellings, fires, and bombings that have beset Samuel Fraunces' great saloon.

Called "Black Sam," in spite of a 1790 census listing him as a free, white male, Samuel Fraunces was a 40-year-old caterer at Bowling Green when he purchased the building at Pearl and Broad (then a warehouse) in 1762 for 2,000 pounds. A successful entrepreneur and a man of great insouciance and personal flair—he once opened a wax museum—Fraunces opened his tavern a year later, calling it the Queen's Head Tavern after Queen Charlotte, the teenage wife of George III. Shortly thereafter, he leased it to John Jones who put up the shingle, "Free Mason Arms," and under whose management it was opened for "the Polite and

Rational Amusement of Philosophical Lectures, Etc.," for which tickets were sold.

Fraunces took it over again in 1770, and from that day until the end of the War of the Revolution 13 years later, the Queen's Head was the headquarters of opposition to the Crown. It was the favorite meeting place for both public and covert gatherings of such patriotic societies as the Sons of Liberty and the Vigilance Committee. On April 24, 1774, following a boisterous gathering at the Queen's Head, members of the two societies marched to a nearby wharf where the British ship *London* was docked and dumped its cargo of tea overboard (a tea party for which New York has yet to receive any publicity).

In August of that year the Massachusetts delegates to the First Continental Congress were entertained by their New York counterparts at a banquet in the Long Room at the Queen's Head. The evening's sumptuous offering, prepared by Fraunces himself, was referred to by John Adams in his diary as "the most splendid dinner I ever saw; a profusion of rich dishes...."

The following year, as the Sons of Liberty and a party of citizens, among them a King's College student named Alexander Hamilton, were removing the cannon from the fort at the Battery, the British man-o-war *Asia* fired on them. Fortunately for Hamilton and the others, the gunner's aim was poor. The cannon shot sailed a few hundred feet off its mark and through the Queen's Head roof. The incident was rendered memorably by the poet Freneau in these lines:

Scarce a broadside was ended 'till another
began again—
By Jove! it was nothing but Fire away
Flannagan!
Some thought him saluting his Sally's and
Nancy's
Till he drove a round shot through the roof
of Sam Francis.

The tavern's most famous moment in history, of course, came after the war. General Washington had made Fraunces Tavern his final headquarters, and he gave there the final speech of his military career to an assemblage that included the Generals Greene, Knox, Wayne, Von Steuben, Gates, and Kosciuszko. Years later, when Washington returned to New York as President, he named Sam Fraunces his official Steward, perhaps as a reward for his good food, good drink, and his daughter Phoebe's loyalty—she had turned in her lover who was a member of a plot to assassinate General Washington in 1776 and who was executed as a result.

Sam Fraunces died in Philadelphia in 1795. Since then his tavern has had nine owners, all of whom sought to preserve it, and of whom the patriotic Sons of the Revolution are the most recent and efficacious.

The Sons, I quickly learned (having

drunk with one), are not to be confused with the Sons of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Tavernkeepers, or the IOOF. The Sons, whose 500 members lay claim to being direct descendants of ancestors who fought in the Revolution (an ex-president of the Sons was Jackie O's father), have their headquarters in a warren of offices on the upper floors of the tavern. They lease the bar-restaurant to Norden while maintaining a museum, a colonial flag collection, and, in an adjacent building, a fifth-floor sail loft where sails for 19th-century clippers were built and repaired. Elbert, the museum janitor who was good enough to take me upstairs to see the sail loft—not open to the public—told me about an obnoxious lady from a historical society who, upon visiting the tavern a few years ago, remarked, "this isn't the oldest building in New York and I'm going to have a survey done to prove it." She was never heard from again.

The tavern itself occupies only the eldest of a four-building complex whose various dining and meeting halls are interconnected by more dark passageways and creaking staircases than the average half-

boozed writer can possibly comprehend. One particularly notable meeting room and banquet hall, however, belongs to the Anglers Club of New York. The Anglers, whose annex to the tavern suffered the brunt of the 1975 bombing, are a private club of gentlemen anglers who pay \$125 a year for the privilege of lunching together, selling \$200 flyrods to one another, and sometimes fishing together. The club has some 400 members in New York and around the world. A present member is Laurance Rockefeller; some former Anglers were Warren Harding, Herbert Hoover, and Dwight Eisenhower (Richard Nixon, whose law firm was only a few blocks away, was a frequent diner at Fraunces but eschewed the fishing). In fact, members say, President Hoover may have been one of the world's greatest fly fishermen; alas, his collection of dry flies reportedly was a casualty of the bombing.

Curios are the stock-in-trade of the Fraunces Tavern Museum. Beyond the usual Revolutionary museum pieces—flintlocks, swords, and the like—it contains such objects of Americana as a lock of Washington's hair and a false wooden tooth said to be from his mouth, General

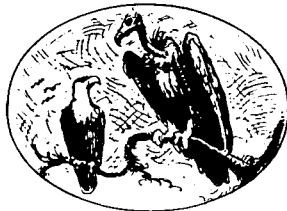
Lafayette's badly-scarred writing desk (a testimonial, if there ever was one, that the pen is mightier than the sword), a wooden panel from Washington's presidential coach, half a bottle of Farquhar Madeira of 1789 vintage (auctioned for \$3,000 in 1860), and, most interesting of all from the standpoint of military readiness, the camp chest of Baron Von Steuben, chief trainer of the Continental Army. A large, hand-built crate well-stocked with wine decanters, liquor flasks, and glasses, it was toted about on the back of Von Steuben's aide-de-camp like some fine piece of artillery awaiting the moment when, forced to bivouac in some dusty, godforsaken place, the general found need to avail himself of its contents.

All the history books of the Macmillans and the McGraw-Hills and the Silver Burdetts notwithstanding, such was the stuff of which the Revolutionary spirit of the Colonies was made and nurtured. And without it, without a Fraunces Tavern in which the patriot of the day could consort and conspire with his like-minded countrymen, well, we might all be sipping tea and drinking Guinness instead of munching peanuts and swilling Billy Beer. □

THE NATION'S PULSE

by

Peter J. Rusthoven



Undue Process

In Washington this fall, supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment are treating the nation to a historically unprecedented spectacle. As everyone who has followed the stormy progress of the ERA is aware, time is running out for this most visible symbol of the so-called Women's Liberation Movement. As with every constitutional amendment in modern history, the ERA was given seven years to obtain the requisite ratifications by three-fourths of the states. In March of 1979, the seven-year period for ERA will expire, and the amendment will be either two or six states short of the necessary 38, depending on whether subsequent rescissions by states

which had previously ratified the amendment are considered effective. Rather than accept this negative judgment of the traditional constitutional process, ERA backers have launched a frenzied lobbying effort in Congress for a three-year extension of the ratification period. At this writing, this curious effort seems disturbingly likely to succeed.

The extension proposal, which has already passed the House, is a truly remarkable exercise in the politics of "it all depends on whose ox is being gored." The vocal minority which has led the push for ERA, never particularly concerned to project an impression of even-handedness or fair play, has abandoned any pretense to these values in this last-ditch effort to preserve its cherished amendment from

defeat. While congressional passage of an amendment requires a two-thirds vote in each house, pro-ERA forces assert that a simple majority is sufficient to extend the ratification period. Although the seven-year limit was included in the ERA as passed in 1972, it is now argued that this is merely a "procedural" point, and not truly part of the amendment itself. Similarly, not content with receiving an extension, which has never been given to any other amendment, ERA supporters insist that Congress declare past and possible future rescissions of previous ratifications ineffective. In several states, one might note, ratification was achieved only after defeat in an earlier session of the legislature. Thus, backers of the amendment will permit states to change from "no" to "yes," but the con-

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verse is to be forbidden. Finally, the ERA lobby, confident of success in the House and Senate, declares that decisions on all these issues rest in the exclusive province of Congress, and therefore, under the "political questions" doctrine, are not subject to review by the Supreme Court.

It takes no special training in law or constitutional history to perceive the cynical one-sidedness of these various positions. Grover Rees—who apparently does possess such training—has gone further by persuasively demonstrating the absurdities implicit in the various ERA positions in an excellent recent article in *National Review*. Among other things, for example, Rees points out that the "no rescision" argument is wholly inconsistent with the intent of the Framers in including the requirement that no amendment would be effective without approval of three-fourths of the states. The Founding Fathers sought to insure substantially contemporaneous consensus among the states before any changes in our fundamental governing instrument would occur. But under the ERA theory, Rees notes, 37 states could ratify an amendment that was riding a temporary wave of political popularity; then all 37 could, on more sober reflection, change their minds and rescind the ratification; but if one other state then endorsed the proposal, it would become part of the Constitution. Similarly, Rees illustrates the dangers of precluding Supreme Court review of the critical constitutional questions

involved. A congress, subject to intense political and electoral pressures, could pass an amendment one day, announce the next day that it had received evidence sufficient to satisfy it that three-fourths of the state legislatures had approved, and then declare the amendment a duly ratified constitutional provision. The ERA position would leave no avenue of judicial challenge to such a high-handed procedure.

Now I will confess that, with respect to the substance of ERA, I am an opponent of the amendment, though not a particularly fervent one. Basically, I believe that to the extent sex is an illegitimate factor in official decision-making, it is already illegal under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and that the ERA is therefore unnecessary. Conversely, to the extent the ERA would render suspect recognition of differences between the sexes in areas where such differences may indeed be important—for example, alimony and child-custody disputes—I think the ERA might well prove a nuisance and a source of bad law. Moreover, I believe, with George Gilder, that differences between the sexes are an integral part of human nature, and the source of much of the beauty and mystery of existence on this planet, and that efforts to ignore and eradicate such differences, first, are mistaken, and second, would require totalitarian authority for successful implementation. To the degree that the ERA is a primary rallying point for those, like Bella Abzug, who nonetheless seem bent on such efforts, my opposition to the amendment

increases. Given the foregoing, and the fact that the change being advocated is one of constitutional dimensions, I believe rejection of the ERA is the wisest course.

But my opposition to the extension proposal currently before Congress has nothing to do with my view of the underlying merits of the ERA itself. With respect to the proposed extension, and the related arguments for "no rescision" and "no Supreme Court review," a majority of Congress seems all too willing to treat this as just one more battle in the often cynical arena of partisan politics. The fact that it is dealing with a Constitution—a Constitution which has been a model of free government for almost two hundred years, and has been amended only fifteen times since the Bill of Rights—is being given scant, if any, consideration.

The Bella Abzugs of the world, of course, are little concerned with such matters. On the one hand, they would like to see their particular vision of a perfect universe given constitutional sanction. When it comes to getting the amendment enacted, they are perfectly willing to act like so many ward-healers ramming through a questionable zoning ordinance. If, in the process, they do irreparable damage to the careful and deliberately difficult procedures for amending the basic charter of our Republic, they are unperturbed. One can only hope that most of Congress will, upon reflection, adopt a more far-sighted and statesmanlike posture. □

BOOK REVIEW

Politics and Markets

Charles E. Lindblom / Basic Books / \$15.00

Adam Meyerson

Whenever they hear the word "market," half the world's leaders reach for their revolvers. Often the reaction is a shrewd political instinct: Any self-respecting despot knows he must squelch a form of economic organization that diffuses authority and makes a mess of planners' tidy diagrams. But the suppression of the market also results from some silly prejudices—from associating the marketplace with the dominance of corporate (and in many countries foreign) enterprise and with a grossly unequal distribution of income and wealth. By ignoring for ideological reasons the informational signals

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and incentives of market prices, political leaders the world over have made decisions with consequences they did not intend. Russia with its mighty forests has a paper shortage. India, with its plentiful labor and scanty savings, invests in capital-intensive heavy industry and wonders what to do about unemployment. And twenty thousand memo-writers at the U.S. Department of Energy daily scratch their noggins about problems that could best be solved by eliminating their jobs.

Yet a new interest in markets is burgeoning, and in some unlikely corners. A brilliant, if utopian, theoretician of the French Socialist Party, Michel Rocard, hopes to combine worker self-management with the decentralization and decision-making flexibility of the marketplace. The accomplishments of rural China result not

only from communal industriousness but also from the allocative efficiency of market-like pricing. And the economic transformation of South Korea, which defies all pronouncements on the hopelessness of Third World poverty, is due as much to a dollop of market freedom—to the entrepreneurial energy released by the sundering of bureaucratic straitjackets—as to a generous infusion of American aid.

Charles Lindblom, a political economist at Yale, has long been one of the most articulate chroniclers and advocates of this "rediscovery of the market." His argument has not been libertarian: Freedom with a capital F seems to concern him little, and when it does, he is quick to point out the conventional but not-to-be-forgotten wisdom that market exchanges can be highly coercive in times of unemployment.

Nor is his primarily the economist's enthusiasm for "Pareto optimality," that maximization of overall welfare for which it is impossible to add to one person's happiness without diminishing another's. His interest has rather been in the market as a decision-making mechanism. "The human condition," he writes in *Politics and Markets*, "is small brain, big problems." And much like Friedrich Hayek, Lindblom has long argued that markets, by breaking up big problems into a decentralized collection of little ones, and by reducing complex information to a simple determination of marginal gains and losses, can facilitate decision-making—whatever one's ideology. Thus he has urged the use of market pricing as an instrument of socialist planning; for without the cost information that market prices provide for alternative uses of resources, it is difficult for planners to set their production priorities. His pronouncements in this respect have been especially vigorous for the developing countries, where the critical shortage is often not so much that of capital or technology as of decision-making ability.

In *Politics and Markets*, his most ambitious consideration of the possibilities of markets, Lindblom's imagination soars—sometimes into a rarefied atmosphere of abstract categories and wishful thinking, but always above the heaviness of most ideological debate. Markets, he points out, are commonly associated with corporate capitalism, but they may just as easily coordinate and motivate the decisions of public or worker-run or cooperative enterprises.* Indeed, while admitting that Yugoslavia's workers' councils are largely rubber stamps for Communist Party management, he looks to that country's attempts at market socialism as a grand experiment—fashioning not only new kinds of market enterprises but also a socialism which, at least on paper, minimizes bureaucratic control. With his fertile imagination, Lindblom also severs the popular link between markets and that idol of businessmen, consumer sovereignty. Markets, he shows, can also be organized on the basis of "planner sovereignty," in which, rather like American defense contracting, state planners determine the allocation of resources by choosing among competing producers for their purchases. However inefficient such a system may appear—"Pentagon capitalism" is not known for its cost control—it has its advantages when compared with more centralized forms of planning, and could impart to socialist economies some of the incentives, flexibility, and competitiveness of market mechanisms without sacrificing the authority of collective (or despotic) planners.

* See my article, "Co-op Capitalism," which was inspired by Lindblom's ideas, in the April 1978 issue of this journal.

Lindblom blurs the distinction between market and planned economies in other ways. All planned economies, he observes, use the market mechanism for some purposes—usually, within certain limits, for the allocation of labor and consumer goods. Market economies, meanwhile, all contain significant elements of hierarchic authority, and not solely as a result of government meddling. Business corporations confront markets in their exterior dealings: They must ply their wares before an increasingly skeptical public, and vie to attract employees from an increasingly demanding work force. But in their internal affairs, that is to say, in the production and distribution of goods before they reach the market, Lindblom, echoing Ronald Coase and Alfred Chandler, shows that the historical role of the corporation has been to supersede the price mechanism and replace it by a series of internal

commands. This is nothing to be ashamed of. To get what you want on the marketplace, it is necessary to induce someone else to provide it. That is the market's great libertarian virtue, for transactions result from mutually beneficial exchange rather than force (though, as Lindblom points out, the threat of terminating an existing exchange can be a potent tool of coercion). It is also a practical disadvantage; for inducing the right response can be slow and costly, and there is no guarantee of finding what you want. Corporations have often found it easier to hire direction-followers and to integrate vertically than to trust to the hurly-burly and uncertainties of the market.

So far so brilliant. But unfortunately, *Politics and Markets* has been receiving less attention for such thought-provoking

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insights which make up most of the book, and more for a hackneyed and outdated series of chapters on the political role of corporate enterprise in market economies. Lindblom starts off well enough on the subject, which he aptly calls "the close but uneasy relation between business enterprise and democracy." It is no accident, he observes, that although not all market-based economies are "polyarchies" (by which he means constitutional democracies), all existing polyarchies are private-enterprise market systems. After tracing the common historical and philosophical roots of economic and political liberalism, and showing that political freedom as understood in the West requires the maintenance of some basic economic freedoms, Lindblom points out that constitutional democracy, like marketplace ideology, is based above all on a fear of concentrated power:

All historical and contemporary examples [of polyarchy] are, in their anxiety over the conventional liberties, marked by a separation of powers and other devices to prevent a great mobilization of authority in one person or organization, even for what might be thought to be legitimate national purposes. Polyarchies... grow out of a struggle to control authority rather than to create it or make it more effective. They are therefore political systems that are, again, like markets. They practice decentralization, diffusion of influence and power, and mutual adjustment so that individuals and small groups rather than national collectivities can strive for whatever they wish.

Close therefore. Why uneasy? Lindblom does not mention the obvious point that private enterprises can often be very happy in systems with few political freedoms—witness Nazi Germany or contemporary Brazil. What intrigues him most is the "logic" of decision-making; and because he can conceive of markets which are not private-enterprise systems, because he can conceive of "polyarchies" which are not market economies, he observes that there is no necessary logical connection between democracy and private enterprise. Fair enough. But then Lindblom suddenly gets suspicious: If other organizational forms are logically possible, why haven't they been tried? And in particular, he asks, "Why have no polyarchies, notwithstanding their liberal and constitutional origins, made a significant attempt at a centrally directed and authoritative system?" Never mind that the voters of France have on several occasions made some very earnest attempts. To explain the nonfulfillment of a logical possibility, Lindblom invokes the bogeyman of brainwashing. Specifically he argues that "businessmen generally and corporate executives in particular take on a privileged role in government...unmatched by any leadership group other than government officials themselves"; that "every general medium of mass communication carries a heavy freight of business ideology," with "the possibility that businessmen achieve an indoctrination of citizens"; and that the "universal hostility" of consti-

tutional democracies to central production planning is attributable mainly to business control of popular thought and decision-making.

There is some truth to the first of these propositions. In private-enterprise market economies, the long-run advancement of income and employment depends on the investment decisions of private businesses; and to the extent that political figures genuinely want to further the long-run economic health of their electorates, they must ensure that businessmen have sufficient opportunities for profit. To that extent, Lindblom is entirely correct in observing that "the unspoken possibility of adversity for business operates as an all-pervasive constraint on government authority." And he is probably correct as well in arguing that business is the most influential of interest groups, for however powerful labor unions, farmers, or environmentalists may be in their respective



domains, none is so critical as business to the long-run functioning of the economy.

Yet as any resident of New York City or Buenos Aires or London will inform you, government officials are not always motivated by these long-run considerations. Democratic decision-making is constrained not only by the need to satisfy business, but also, among other things, by the need to get elected, to build political coalitions, to raise revenue, and to avoid insoluble problems by deferring their consequences to the future. These other constraints, which vary from time to time and from place to place, often lead to the removal rather than the granting of privileges to business. In Italy today, no managerial decision is made without the support of Communist-controlled unions, and in almost all of Western Europe it has become enormously difficult for corporations to lay off workers. In America, meanwhile, there has been such a proliferation of organized interest groups in the last 45 years—including many conflicting ones within the

business community—that business, even if it is still the most powerful of interest groups, must struggle for its influence with an increasing number of others. At a time when businesses are overwhelmed by court injunctions, by regulations, and by hostile articles in much of the press, Lindblom's bald assertion of corporations' "privileged position" is simply not very useful.

And when it comes to the control of thought, one wonders whether Lindblom has read a newspaper in the last ten years. American courts and regulatory agencies, for example, have recently brought to a halt the construction of nuclear power plants, have imposed enormous punitive damages on such companies as Ford and Allied Chemical, and have involved themselves in a wide variety of business decisions—from the size of tuna catches to the height of fire extinguishers above the floor. Yet to read Lindblom one would have no idea that there has been a transformation of environmental and safety law. In the one case that he cites, the judge refused to award punitive damages to a drug company, on the grounds that the concern had "wrought much good in the past." Likewise Lindblom barely mentions antitrust except to observe that "the Sherman Act, ostensibly enacted to regulate industrial monopoly, was [originally] used to constrain unions rather than enterprises." He does not discuss what antitrust was used for afterwards. Antitrust, of course, is not always opposed by businesses (certainly not by Berkey Photo), and it is probably no coincidence that the two countries with the most vigorous antitrust policies—the United States and West Germany—are also the two most committed to a market economy. But in antitrust as in general, Lindblom selectively chooses his evidence so as to attribute to business political advantages that no longer exist.

All of which is unfortunate, for Lindblom has both the insight and the broad sweep of history to tackle some of the more important questions in this subject. Why, for example, is there much more popular hostility toward business in Europe than in America? Why does the idea of the marketplace have more ideological appeal for North American than for South American businessmen? How is it that since the war Germany with its "social market economy" and France with its *étatiste* planning have achieved remarkably similar economic progress? What accounts for the relative political strength of business in, say, Chicago, and its comparative weakness in New York? What differences are there in the political behavior of bankers and industrialists? The question Lindblom should have asked is not whether businessmen have a privileged position, but what exactly are and are not their privileges, and for which businessmen. If Lindblom had looked at business as imaginatively as he has considered politics and markets, this would be a masterpiece of a book. □

BOOK REVIEW

The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

Chen Jo-hsi / Indiana University Press / \$8.95

The Coldest Winter in Peking

Hsia Chih-yen / Doubleday / \$10.00

Miriam London

In the next to last story of *The Execution of Mayor Yin*, the reader catches a surprise glimpse of the "glamorous" writer and Mao-idolater, Han Suyin, in the prow of a tour boat on the Li River near Kweilin in southern China. She is wholly unaware that she is sailing through a story and, indeed, is not turned toward the reader (who watches in humble fictional company from a passing boat) but gazes delightedly at the scenic wonders on the river shores. By the time he has got this far in the book, the reader understands: It is not an accident that Han Suyin's eyes are averted. She will never turn and see the China of Chen Jo-hsi.

The Westerner in search of Chinese reality will find it reflected not in the romantic effusions of a Han Suyin but in Chen Jo-hsi's low-keyed stories, at last accessible in excellent English translation. The clear, easy flow of the stories is due to the writer's skill rather than to reduction of a complex truth. There is actually more strict accuracy of report in Chen Jo-hsi's fiction than in many a "documented"—and unreadable—product of Sinological scholarship.

Yet Chen Jo-hsi is not a professional scholar. She was already a published young writer in Taiwan when she left for graduate study in the United States. In 1966, the year the Cultural Revolution began, she and her husband acted daringly on their faith in the Maoist dream and went off to live in the People's Republic. Their stay lasted seven years. She did not write a line during those years—except perhaps in a diary, as a small episode in the story "Residency Check" suggests—but it is evident that she became an extraordinary observer. The real narrator behind the pseudonymous "I" in several of the stories that followed upon the seven-year silence is precisely this observer—a sane, decent, unobtrusive human being, who is also exquisitely alert (at times like a frightened mouse) and does not miss a trick.

It is possible without risk of error to generalize from the particular almost anywhere in Chen's stories—even from seemingly incidental detail. The Red Guard in the title story who "could not bear to take off his olive-green uniform long enough for it to be laundered, so his collar and cuffs were always shiny with oily grime," is typical in his adolescent posturing of the first arrogant Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution—whose mothers, indeed, had

trouble getting them to remove their dirty military jackets. In "Jen Hsiu-lan," one discovers among various persons forced to make public confession at a Nanking University mass meeting "a Red Guard who had taken a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* while ransacking the library, and after studying the book thoroughly...had made it his personal bible." The case of this Red Guard is not a mere oddity served up by Chen Jo-hsi for special effect. Research

among young Chinese emigrants has turned up a number of instances of Hitlerian influence on Red Guards and in places other than Nanking.

The old kinsman of Mayor Yin, in the title story, who notes that "even though the People's Government tries its best, we suffer from famine if there's a spell of bad weather," and that "there are still times when people must chew leaves and grass and the bark of trees," is describing a

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situation true not only of his poor mountainous area in Shensi, but of similar regions elsewhere in China. Thus, in "Night Duty," a recently returned overseas Chinese, doing labor in a "May Seventh" collective farm in northern Kiangsu, is greatly shocked to find that the farm must be guarded nightly against the very peasants from whom he and other intellectuals have presumably come to "learn." Northern Kiangsu is one of the more impoverished areas in China. The fact that constant patrols are needed there to prevent theft of food supplies by hungry peasants comes as no surprise to anyone who has analyzed Chinese internal broadcasts or talked to emigrants in Hong Kong.

The import of such disparate detail may not be obvious to the general reader, but the overriding theme of Chen's stories is plain: It is the real effect on people living in China of Mao Tse-tung's extreme and treacherously shifting policies, which have been the subject of so much airily abstract analysis abroad. As the fate of the good Mayor Yin demonstrates, honest loyalty to the fickle party line could be the most dangerous course of all. The fanatic leftist, Jen Hsiu-lan, in the story by that name, was a creature of the Cultural Revolution, which then reversed itself to destroy her. Had she withstood a little longer her confinement in a "study class"—that innocuous-sounding psychological compression chamber—a new reversal of political line might have averted the sickening last act in her life. The spiritually broken professor in "Residency Check," like many other politically branded people in China, became a perennial target of "struggle" or—to use a witticism of the New China—the "performing athlete" of every movement. On the other hand, Hsiao Chang, the clever young physicist of the Academy of Sciences in "Keng Erh in Peking," easily navigated every change of course and survived to live pleasantly and well. ("You'll be all right if you just get on the bandwagon quickly," he tells his colleague, Keng Erh, as he refills the latter's glass. "Come on...this is what really counts: 'Here is wine, let us sing/For man's life is short.'")

One should not imagine that Chen Jo-hsi has produced a kind of political coloring book. The villains and heroes of the propaganda hack are nowhere in her stories. People who live in severely regimented societies, her characters seem to suggest, are neither crueler nor kinder than elsewhere, only weaker—swaying compliantly with the political winds (like "grass-on-the-wall," as the Chinese say) in the wistful hope of sustaining their scrap of normal life with its ordinary pleasures and troubles. Was it really the state alone that thwarted the marriage plans of the lonely bachelor Keng Erh, or his own submissive slowness? In any case, he does not live without small consummate pleasures—like

eating mutton fire pot in Peking to the accompaniment of a wine called Bamboo Green. The strongest of Chen Jo-hsi's characters is undoubtedly the sexy P'eng Yü-lien of the "large and curvaceous" breasts, who manages to be an enchanting butterfly among worms bundled in cocoons and is faithful to her husband after her fashion. Unsurprisingly, it was not a party secretary who sought to crush her in the name of Communist morality—quite the contrary, in fact—but a pack of good, proper, envious women. But, somehow, one feels that P'eng Yü-lien will win out handily.

The most persistent after-impression of Chen Jo-hsi's stories, however, is that of crepuscular sadness and waste—a perverse, dumbfounding waste of human intelligence, talent, and industry. "[W]hat has the Cultural Revolution done to culture?" the returned overseas Chinese asks himself in "Night Duty." The answer is embodied in the once-promising student and lover of books whom he now observes daily hammering old tin cans into kerosene stoves, with the placid concentration of a madhouse inmate cutting out paper dolls. During the worst years of Stalinist terror in the Soviet Union, many intellectuals were able to save their minds, if not their souls, by burying themselves more deeply in their professional work, especially in the "safer" abstract sciences. The "stinking intellectuals" of China, under the obscurantist reign of Mao Tse-tung, were not so lucky. The sorriest of all Chen Jo-hsi's characters is the poor wreck of a formerly spirited, brilliant young scholar, glimpsed once on a summer evening leaning against his front door, open-mouthed and "motionless, like some kind of fossil," staring into the vacuity of his own life.

A number of recent emigrants from the China mainland who read Chen Jo-hsi's stories when they first appeared in 1974-1976 in the Hong Kong press, while unanimous in confirming the truth of her work, often add: But all this we already know; she is really writing for the West. It may be that those most familiar with Chinese reality tend to take its clear reflection in Chen's work for granted; it is not easy to write accurately and well. The reaction itself, however, is significant in suggesting the limitations of Chen's art. "Everything she writes is true," said a young woman who fled Canton in 1975, and then added, startlingly, "But the book that really impressed me, when I read it in China, was *The Diary of Anne Frank*. I felt very much like Anne Frank then." "Chen Jo-hsi's stories may resemble Chekhov's," said a young man who had read many privately-circulated copies of Russian classics in China during the late sixties and early seventies, "but after a Chekhov story something deeper remains—something to think about."

Chen Jo-hsi's stories are, perhaps, too

bound by the author's expository purpose to allow creativity its own free and mysterious way. In addition—as natives of the New China sense—her viewpoint is still that of the onlooker at a perceptible remove from the insider's China. Chen Jo-hsi makes us watch and listen, as in "Jen Hsiu-lan," when she takes us in search of the fugitive Jen, the once-fierce heroine of the Cultural Revolution, and even on a visit to the dark cell from which she fled. But the real Jen Hsiu-lan has lived and died outside this story.

The pseudonymous author of *The Coldest Winter in Peking*, Hsia Chih-yen—a middle-aged emigrant living in Japan—writes as an insider, but, unfortunately, his book cannot be taken seriously. In his modest and touching preface he tells of a moment in Peking, "around 1960," when he suddenly "deeply regretted that I had not studied literature. I was filled with a desire to record everything I had seen and had witnessed, so that none of it might perish into oblivion. I wanted to preserve the historical evidence."

The connection between this preface—especially its stated purpose—and the pot-boiler that follows is hard to fathom. The kindest thing that can be said is that the author, lacking both talent and literary skill, labored so hard at constructing "fiction" that he did the job: Not a living person or unmangled truth survives his effort. According to the translator of *The Coldest Winter in Peking*, its style "derives unmistakably from traditional Chinese narrative," but to this occidental eye, the book looks distinctly more derivative of a Western political thriller, with every ingredient from top-level panic and hot lines to Natasha, the creamy Russian spy (stepping, undressed for action, out of her last fictional assignment). Noticeable also are clichés borrowed from the files of socialist realism (model heroes, guaranteed to "self-destruct"—this time by throwing themselves against Soviet tanks in Inner Mongolia) and a moist application of modern Chinese bathos (e.g., the dying words of Hsia Yu-min, young intellectual of the anti-Mao underground: "Winter... will... pass.... Spring is bound to come..."). Ironically, it is this bathos, often found in the amateur writing of Chinese recently from the mainland, that helps mark Hsia Chih-yen's genuineness as an insider.

The literary technique attempted by Hsia is a familiar one: the convergence of disjointed episodes and separate human destinies toward a climactic event—in this case, a coup in Peking. As a few recent residents of that city attest, Hsia knows Peking well—and the little of historical interest in his book stems from this knowledge. Even for an initiate, however, it is sometimes hard to ascertain where the author's fantasy ends and truth begins; and after the first chapters, the distinction ceases to be troubling—everything seems equally unreal.

The general reader may mistakenly discount as imaginary the single most important fact in the book: the existence in China of underground organizations of conspiratorial youth—although not, according to certain young Chinese emigrants,

in the numerical force described by Hsia.

It is painful to learn that Hsia, evidently encouraged by the success of the original version of his book in Japan—a baffling phenomenon in itself—is at work on a second novel of this genre. It is too late to

tell him that he might do better just to write from his own experience. So much fantasy has been written about China in the last decade, it seems a folly that Hsia Chih-yen, in the name of honest realism, should concoct more. □

BOOK REVIEW

Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation
Ed. by Robert C. Tucker / W.W. Norton / \$19.95

Abraham Ascher

For decades students of the Soviet Union have grappled with the question of the relationships between Stalinism and Leninist Bolshevism and between Stalinism and Marxism. Ironically, some of the most ardent defenders and many of the sharpest critics of the Stalinist system have agreed that there was a direct and continuous line of development from Marx through Lenin to Stalin. The former take

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this view in order to legitimate Stalin's policies. For the latter, the demonstration of such links reinforces their conviction that the attempt to implement utopian goals inevitably leads to disastrous consequences. At the same time, Marxist critics of the Stalinist order (most notably Trotsky and his followers) and a growing number of scholars contend that the dictator either betrayed the master's principles or, for one reason or another, pursued policies that constituted a decisive break with Leninist traditions and practices.

This involves more than a dispute over

ideological consistency, since our assessment of Communism's capacity to undergo fundamental change depends largely on how we interpret the relationship between Bolshevism and Stalinism. The issue bears not only on our understanding of historical events but also on our analysis of current Soviet affairs, and thus on our estimates of the probable directions of Soviet policies.

In the opening chapter of this collection of essays, Stephen Cohen points out that the notion of a "fundamental continuity" between Leninist Bolshevism and Stalinism has been a premise of most Western

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scholarship on the Soviet Union. Thus, one writer contended that Stalinism was "a logical and probably inevitable stage in the organic development of the Communist Party." Another stated that "great as the changes have been from 1917 to the present [1949], in its fundamentals Stalin's policy is a further development of Leninism." More recently, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn developed the same thesis in a savage critique of Communism:

...in reality Lenin had given shape to all the main aspects [of Communism] before Stalin ever came on the scene. It was Lenin who deceived the peasants about their land. He is the one who deceived the workers about self-management. He is the one who turned the trade unions into organs of oppression. He is the one who created the concentration camps. It is he who sent troops out to the border areas to crush any national movements for liberation and to set up an empire.

Stalin's only innovation, according to Solzhenitsyn, was to base his system of rule on mistrust: "Where it would have been enough—in order to instill general fear—to jail two people, he jailed a hundred."

Professor Cohen objects to this "continuity" thesis on philosophical as well as factual grounds. It implies a deterministic view of the historical process, which in any case ill accords with the course of events. In the 1920s there existed alternatives other than Stalinism, and it was not a foregone conclusion that all of them would be rejected by the leadership of the Communist Party. Mr. Cohen himself has written an impressive biography of Nikolai Bukharin, the chief advocate of the moderate economic policies that prevailed from 1921 to 1928. During this period of the so-called New Economic Policy (NEP), the government tolerated a private sector in small farming and manufacturing, trade, and service enterprises. Moreover, during those early years there existed an "officially tolerated social pluralism [in] cultural, intellectual, and even...political life." Within the Communist Party intense debates over policies were conducted; and artists as well as writers still enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom of self-expression. Throughout the country people appeared to be reasonably content with the state of affairs. It was only after Stalin had triumphed in the bitter struggle for leadership of the party and embarked on his program of breakneck industrialization that a radically new order was introduced.

The distinguishing feature of the new order, according to Cohen, was "excess, extraordinary extremism." Stalinism

...was not, for example, merely coercive peasant policies, but a virtual civil war against the peasants; not merely police repression, or even civil war-style terror, but a holocaust by terror that victimized tens of millions of people for twenty-five years; not merely a Thermidorian revival of nationalist tradition, but an almost fascist-like chauvinism; not merely a leader cult, but deification of a despot.

It is hard to quarrel with this eloquent description. Had Lenin lived into the 1930s (not at all a fantastic conjecture, since he was only 54 years old when he died in 1924), it is very unlikely that he would have resorted to the barbarities of Stalin. Everything we know about him suggests that he would not have ordered the murder of former comrades, or of hundreds of thousands of loyal party members. The same can be said of Bukharin, had he triumphed over Stalin.

Nevertheless, by positing an "inevitable" development of one system into another, the writers criticized by Cohen have made it relatively easy for him to marshal refuting evidence. The real question is whether Bolshevism made Stalinism, or a variant of it, possible or probable. In short, did Leninism contain features conducive to the rise of a Stalin? It is true that Lenin favored the NEP, but would he have indefinitely continued policies that tolerated private property and "free enterprise" in a sizable sector of the economy? After all, he was a Marxist, utterly convinced that the abolition of private ownership in the means of production was necessary and desirable. Sooner or later he, too, would have moved against the peasants who owned land and they would have resisted. Although we cannot presume that he would have crushed them the way Stalin did, there is ample evidence to suggest that he was capable of harsh measures.

Cohen himself admits that "the party's growing centralization, bureaucratization, and administrative intolerance after 1917 certainly promoted authoritarianism in the one-party system and abetted Stalin's rise." In fact, ever since 1900 Lenin had rejected democracy, and after 1902 he favored the creation of a hierarchical, highly centralized Marxist party possessed of the right to speak and act for the entire working class.

When Lenin and his tiny party took power in November 1917, the working class represented no more than 3 percent of the Russian people, and by no means all workers supported the Bolsheviks. Within short order all non-socialist and then all non-Bolshevik political parties were outlawed, as was the non-Bolshevik press. As early as December 1917 the Cheka (political police) was created. Although initially its powers were limited to investigation and the only punishments it could mete out were the "confiscation of property and deprivation of ration cards," the political police soon disregarded these restrictions and began to dispose of cases without trial, often executing suspects. By 1921 the Cheka was formally given the right to impose five-year sentences of prison or exile on "persons recognized as dangerous to the Soviet structure." In this early period there already existed forced labor camps to which the police could send individuals by administrative fiat if the in-

vestigation did not "reveal sufficient evidence" for judicial proceedings. Occasionally some Communists criticized the Cheka's excessive powers, but Lenin defended the political police. In 1918 he attacked as "a narrow-minded intelligentsia" those Communists who "sob and fuss" over the Cheka's mistakes: "When we are reproached with cruelty, we wonder how people can forget the most elementary Marxism." Interestingly, as late as 1921 Bukharin, Mr. Cohen's hero, justified the Bolshevik terror of the Civil War years (1918-1921) with a quotation from St. Just, one of the political fanatics of the French Revolution: "One must rule with iron when one cannot rule with law."

The critical point is that throughout the eleven years of Bolshevik rule prior to Stalin's ascendancy a legal order did not exist in the Soviet Union. The best evidence for this is the Criminal Code of 1922 which adopted the essence of Lenin's draft of a statement on discretionary power:

Propaganda, or agitation, or participation in an organization, or co-operation with organizations, having the effect (i.e., the propaganda or agitation) of helping in the slightest way the part of the international bourgeoisie...which is endeavoring to overthrow [the Communist system] by force, whether by intervention, or blockade, or by espionage, or by financing of the press, or by other means—is punishable by death or imprisonment.

This vague formulation was a citizen's nightmare and a policeman's dream.

There remains the question of the Bolsheviks' economic policies. Professor Cohen takes to task those historians who assert that the NEP was merely a "tactical maneuver" to be replaced by genuinely socialist measures as soon as conditions were propitious. He insists that except for some "generally held goals and tenets [such as] socialism, workers' control, nationalization, large-scale farming, planning, and the like," the Bolsheviks before 1917 had no "practical economic policies." He also does not consider War Communism, the harsh economic policies of the years 1918 to 1921, as necessarily a true reflection of Lenin's views on Russian economic development. Forcible requisition of grain from the peasants, the unleashing of class warfare in the countryside, nationalization of major industries without compensation—in short, the "statization" of the economy—all this was undertaken, according to Cohen, because the Soviet regime faced the dual threat of civil war and declining supplies of food and industrial goods.

Now it is true that the Bolsheviks in 1917 did not have a detailed, coherent economic program and that in large measure War Communism was launched to meet a severe crisis. But it is also a fact that all of these radical measures were consistent with goals generally favored by Bolsheviks for over a decade and a half. Moreover,

Lenin's abandonment of War Communism was occasioned not by ideological dissatisfaction but rather by a realization that the economy was in shambles and that the peasantry, still the overwhelming majority of the population, was becoming increasingly hostile to the regime. Indeed, in several rural areas riots increased at an alarming rate. Lenin understood that refusal to make concessions to the peasants could mean the loss of power. So the NEP, like War Communism, was launched in response to a crisis of monumental proportions. After 1921 Lenin did occasionally say that it would be decades before collectivization could be introduced in the countryside, but he did not suggest its abandonment as an ultimate goal. How long he would actually have waited had he lived to old age is, of course, a matter about which one can only speculate.

But there can be little doubt that Lenin's legacy, ideological as well as institutional, helped pave the way for Stalinism. The terror, the absence of a legal order, and rule by a hierarchically organized party not only facilitated Stalin's rise to power but also constituted central features of both Leninist Bolshevism and Stalinism. And yet it cannot be denied that Stalin's "excesses" so drastically changed the system that it is appropriate to consider the Stalinist polity distinctive.

To understand Stalin's "excesses" it is necessary to take into account what Robert Tucker calls the "personal factor" or the "mind and personality of Stalin." Roy

Medvedev makes a similar point when he states:

I still think that the main motives for [his] terror [were] Stalin's inordinate vanity and lust for power. He aspired to autocratic one-man rule, with no restraints whatsoever; he wished to take undeserved credit for building up the Soviet state and Communist party and to those ends he promoted the cult of himself. And when the basic cadres of the party and state were found to be obstacles to the achievement of these goals, Stalin did not hesitate to destroy this layer of people, just as he had not hesitated in dealing with the well-to-do peasantry or the "bourgeois specialists."

But could such a man have reached the heights and carried out his monstrous policies in a country with firmly established, institutional restraints on the exercise of political power?

The question of the relationship between Stalinism and Marxism is even more complicated. Marx's writings, spanning some four decades and covering innumerable theoretical and practical issues, contain opinions that can be cited to justify diverse and often contradictory policies. Moreover, since Marx never occupied a position of political power, we are on even shakier ground in trying to describe how he thought his ideals should be realized than we are in grappling with Lenin's views on this subject. So it is not surprising that the Tucker volume contains two essays that disagree sharply in their interpretations of Stalin's link to Marx.

Mihailo Markovic, a Yugoslav philosopher, rejects the notion that Stalinism was a legitimate offspring of Marxism. In three basic respects Stalin discarded the master's teachings: First, in developing the objectives of the proletarian revolution the Soviet ruler paid no attention to the humanistic concerns that were critical for Marx. Marx emphasized the economic, political, and spiritual liberation of the proletariat; Stalin stressed only the creation of new institutions and accelerated industrialization. Second, Marx held that socialism could be established only after the preconditions for such an order had developed within capitalism; Stalin identified socialism with the mere expropriation of private property in the means of production, even though poverty, agriculture, and authoritarianism still prevailed. Finally, Marx viewed capitalism as a historically necessary phase in human history—progressive compared to previous orders—that had to be "transcended" by a more advanced order; Stalin simply repudiated bourgeois society as "evil, oppressive, full of contradictions." Markovic's analysis, much richer than is suggested by this summary, has a ring of plausibility.

But in his incisive essay, "Marxist Roots of Stalinism," Leszek Kolakowski argues even more plausibly that Stalinism constituted a legitimate, if not the only possible, interpretation of Marx, and that "every attempt to implement all basic values of Marxian socialism [is] likely to generate a political organization that would

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bear marks unmistakably analogous to Stalinism." For Kolakowski, any realization of Marxist ideals necessarily involves the creation of a totalitarian polity. His very use of the term "totalitarianism" is arresting because most contributors to this volume, and many other historians and political scientists, have in recent years come to reject it as far too imprecise and misleading. For example, the author of the article on totalitarianism in the second edition (1968) of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* claimed, among other things, that several of the most important traits usually associated with totalitarianism are found in a wide range of societies, and that consequently the term does not denote a polity that is *sui generis*. He concluded with the hope that "a third encyclopedia of the social sciences, like the first one, will not list 'totalitarianism.'" At the 1967 meetings of the American Political Science Association, he and another scholar contended that the concept gained currency in the 1950s only because it was the "foundation of [the] American counter-ideology in the cold war."

Kolakowski, however, insists—rightly in my view—that by the 1930s the Soviet

system had become totalitarian, by which he means that the state sought to control every form of human activity—economic, political, and cultural. To be sure, the political leadership did not succeed in regulating the Soviet population as closely as it wished. We know that people continued to think independently, though secretly, and that emotional and sexual relationships could not be fully subjugated by the state. Still, civil society was virtually destroyed and the massive terror had the effect of atomizing the citizens into isolated and powerless individuals. They were reduced to a "sack of potatoes," to use the term Marx once applied to French peasants.

A Marxist in power is likely to promote the development of such a society because his doctrine insists on the inevitability of a "perfect unity of mankind," that is, an order in which all social conflict ceases. Kolakowski believes that this "romantic vision" could easily be transformed into an ideology of totalitarianism. In fact, in the Soviet Union the transformation occurred not because Marx deliberately intended it, but because the "basic values" of his notion of a "perfectly unified mankind

[could] hardly be materialized otherwise." To express the point differently: Human beings have such divergent interests and propensities that the kind of social harmony Marx envisioned is unrealizable except in a polity where all institutions are tightly controlled by one center, and where the social and political goals for all groups and individuals are defined by that center.

Although Tucker's volume highlights the question of the relationships among Stalinism, Leninist Bolshevism, and Marxism, it would be misleading to leave the impression that no other issues are explored. The book also contains superb studies of the social background of Stalinism and of the Marxist growth models developed during the 1920s, as well as new material on Stalin's life. Tucker himself contributes a brilliant article, "Stalinism as Revolution from Above," in which he places the events of the 1930s and 1940s in the broad context of Russian history dating back to the fifteenth century. It is no exaggeration to say that the book raises so many fundamental questions about the interpretation of Soviet history that it will exert a major influence on the course of scholarship for years to come. □

BOOK REVIEW

Two Cheers For Capitalism

Irving Kristol / Basic Books / \$10.00

Richard J. Whalen

I have known Irving Kristol since the early 1960s, and he remains as he was when we first met: slightly bemused, chain-smoking, and almost as pleased with a well-aimed quip as with a tightly reasoned argument. His haircut, lapels, and ties attest total indifference to changing fashion. He contentedly patronizes the same West Side Manhattan restaurants and, for all I know, he continues to order the same dishes that he did decades ago, for the sufficient reason that he still likes them. Yet this mild-mannered, almost diffident man is, quite simply, one of the most influential social and political commentators in America, an eminence won in part through a seemingly impossible feat: He has managed to impress at least some American business leaders with the power and importance of ideas.

Of course, many more businessmen skip Kristol's essays in the *Wall Street Journal* than read them; and of that reading minority only a small number both comprehend and act upon his instructions. Even so, by

Richard J. Whalen is a Washington-based writer whose most recent book is Taking Sides (Houghton Mifflin).

sustained force of intellect and style, Kristol has taught a newly aware and activist—and slowly expanding—minority of corporate business leaders that ideas matter decisively, and that they and their giant enterprises are foredoomed if, like so many dinosaurs, they confront their enemies dumb, empty-headed, and mute.

A one-time Marxist who became an early and singularly effective anti-Communist, Kristol in these essays subjects the present conflict between the private and public sectors to rigorous class-interest analysis, and identifies its source, not in benign "misunderstanding" (as some naive executives suppose), but in a struggle for power and moral influence between corporate business and the "New Class"—that educated elite which has carried the anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois values of the campus-based adversary culture into our society's dominant bureaucratic power centers.

This and other themes in Kristol's writing are not unfamiliar, especially as neo-conservatism has enjoyed a kind of celebrity of late. But even those who have read some of the thirty-one essays gathered here when they originally appeared in

the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Public Interest*, and *Commentary* will find fresh insights and abundant rewards on re-reading them consecutively. For these pieces form, as Kristol acknowledges in a preface, "a kind of intellectual autobiography, explaining how and why someone who was once simply content to regard himself as a 'liberal' has come to be a 'neo-conservative'...." In his essays Kristol has been working out a kind of personal dialectic, synthesizing intellectual values and socioeconomic institutions into a new reformist political program which combines the virtues of the free-market system with the advantages of the welfare state. (Kristol, the Hubert Humphrey liberal of a decade ago, now finds much to commend in the person and program of Congressman Jack Kemp, the conservative proponent of radical tax cuts as the cure for our worsening economic ills.)

Naturally, those self-consciously stationed on the ideological flanks reject such synthesizing notions out of hand. For example, conservative economic journalist William Wolman, reviewing Kristol's book

in *Business Week*, condemns it as "an amalgam of innuendo and banality that could easily do damage to the capitalist cause," and he is shocked to report that the author counsels "the natural opponents of socialism to accept the premises of the liberals....If his program were to be adopted, the U.S. would indeed be on the march toward socialism, for in a Kristoline world, the all-powerful state would not only lack effective opposition but also would lack any opposition at all."

Meanwhile, over on the left, reviewer Philip Green, who teaches political science at Smith College, warns the readers of the *Nation* that "the main impetus [of Kristol's book] is nothing more than smugness; what he really wants is to destroy the influence of those members of his own class who are giving it a bad name, so that people like himself can exercise that influence instead....Kristol is no Populist; he's defending the same privileges that conservatives always defend: theirs."

The common thread in such complaints, from right and left, is that Kristol is not sufficiently idealistic or romantic. In fact, because he has a keen nose for fraud, he refuses to believe in large abstractions, such as "Free Enterprise" or "The People." Quite so. The key word in Kristol's vocabulary, it seems to me, is "reasonableness." He is not motivated by a desire to defend a mythical "capitalist cause," for he has met enough real-life

business executives to know that these unpropertied professional managers are often really bureaucrats who belong to the "New Class" without realizing it, and who are seeking that "reasonable" basis of accommodation which Kristol hopes to provide. As for the "ordinary people," Kristol is a resolute small-d democrat, but he has a well-founded distrust of the mob's passions, whether excited by manipulative leftist intellectuals or manipulative capitalist marketers. He writes: "The transformation of the bourgeois citizen into the bourgeois consumer has dissolved that liberal-individualist framework which held the utopian impulses of modern society under control. One used to be encouraged to control one's appetites; now one is encouraged to satisfy them without delay."

In common with other reasonable men, Kristol seeks simultaneously to limit the scope and influence of government in daily life and to bring its goals as close as possible to the grasp of ordinary, unheroic men and women. He embraces capitalism, not without reservations, for a practical reason. Only the social and political arrangements of a capitalist society will permit that proper limitation of government activity which ensures individual liberty. What is more, the "alternatives... range from the hideous to the merely squalid." He rejects the implicit socialist ideal of the "New Class" for a similar con-

crete and practical reason: "There is no such thing as socialism—understood as a *voluntary* cooperative community—in the real world of the 20th century. There are only versions of more or less coercive, more or less bureaucratic collectivism."

So Kristol, in the end, is a sober realist and anti-romantic, yet one who nevertheless is in search of an attainable ideal that will restore legitimacy and vitality to the embattled institutions and values of liberal capitalism. For he properly insists upon the need for putting the "free society" on a moral foundation. As he writes, "the institutions of our society have lost their vital connection with the values which are supposed to govern the private lives of our citizenry."

Rather than make the institutions more powerful and overweening, the prescription of the "New Class," Kristol hopes for a renewing synthesis within the individual citizen: "If our private and public worlds are ever again, in our lifetimes, to have a congenial relationship—if virtue is to regain her lost loveliness—then some... combination of the reforming spirit with the conservative ideal seems to me to be what is most desperately wanted."

For so eloquently expressing that honorable hope, on which the future of our civilization depends, and for striving so tirelessly for its fulfillment, Irving Kristol has won a special place in the intellectual history of our time. □

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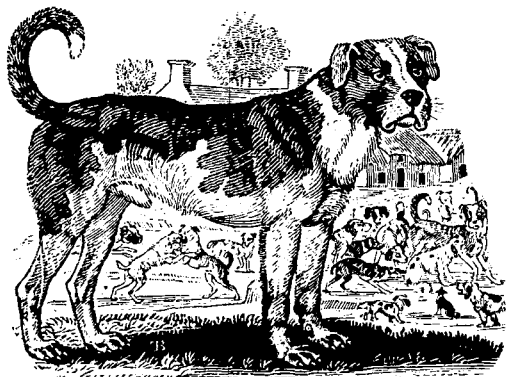
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SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

The 1980 Watch

Mastiff: "Wait & See"



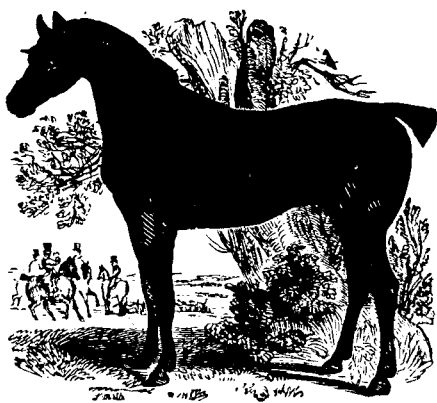
Still undecided as to whether he should announce his candidacy for the 1980 Republican Presidential Nomination: If another candidate effectively articulating his own principles steps forward, he will not run at all.

Establishment Candidate?



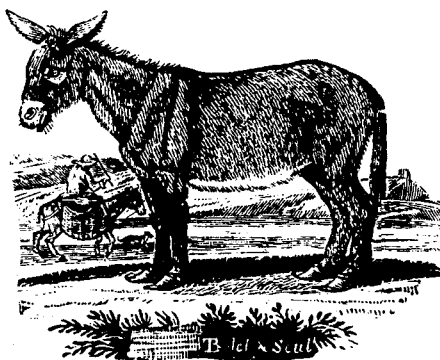
Several prominent national columnists have mentioned him as a contender for the 1980 Republican Presidential Nomination.

Considered a Possibility



Long-shot Republican Presidential Nominee or merely dark horse? Respected observers aren't placing any sizeable bets.

Democratic Re-nominee



After the recent Summit Conference he is considered certain of the 1980 Democratic nod.

(Pictured above: mastiff, bush, dark horse, ass.)

University Fashions

Late in August eight thousand teenagers wearing jogging shorts arrived at a large Midwestern university. Four years of giggling and getting *really drunk* lie ahead for the college class of 1982. Just how will our universities be molding these leaders of America's Third Century?

An answer may be inferred from a remarkable portrait of America's new ruling class by Professor Everett Carl Ladd, Jr., in the July/August issue of *Public Opinion* magazine. In one particular section, entitled "Personal Values of Americans by Educational Attainment," the most educated individuals are shown to have the least responsible attitude on every issue. College graduates were far likelier than those less educated to dismiss work, success, saving money, and staying out of debt as "not very important." Post-graduates went further, declaring adultery not always wrong, defense spending excessive, and Communism *not* the worst kind of government. (No information on just which political system they find the worst is included—although Pinochetism, Shahism, Ian-Smithism, and South-Koreaism seem likely choices. If so, their view that defense spending should be cut is logical, since in spite of everything the Park Regime does not yet pose a grave threat to our security, at least militarily.)

For an explanation of how college graduates have come by their interesting perspective on global politics and the good life, Professor Ladd and Seymour Martin Lipset's earlier study of "Academics, Politics, and the 1972 Election" is suggestive. While 60.8 percent of the electorate voted Republican that year, 76 percent of university-level social science faculty voted Democratic (ominously, another 2 percent

voted "other"). For members of the Class of '82 reading this, it should be recalled that the November 1972 balloting took place before John Dean emerged as a world historical figure.

University faculty as a whole also strongly supported the McGovern candidacy, with those under 35 and those in "upper tier" schools giving him 71 percent and 72 percent of their votes. How social science faculty under 35 at upper tier schools might have voted is anyone's guess.

The Rumania Watch

Our East European correspondent has sent us this dispatch:

"Nicolae Ceausescu, potentate of Rumania, friend of moguls and parliaments, has suffered an unexpected reverse with the defection of a top-ranking Rumanian security officer, Lt. Gen. Ion Pacepa. Pacepa is perhaps the most senior police official to turn from the Soviet Bloc since the end of World War II. The CIA and its European counterparts lost no time in grilling the general on Rumanian affairs, secrets of the Warsaw Pact, and the truth of rumors of further Communist infiltration in the West German government.

"The defection was also noteworthy for what it has revealed of Rumanian palace life. Mysteriously, Rumania enjoys a charmed reputation in the West. Barbara Walters and Joe Garagiola both have sung its praises; a cheery American TV special, "Nadia—From Rumania with Love," was from Bucharest's standpoint marred only by the defection of its Rumanian coproducer. Control Data Corp., of Minneapolis, had chosen the Rumanian capital to announce its first cash dividend, but an earthquake intervened and the Yankees were forced to fall back on the safer, if less progressive, fastness of Vienna. When Ceausescu dropped in on Britain this spring, the government declared it a state visit, thereby allowing him to inspect as many palace guards as he pleased. In Washington, Rumanian diplomatic offices are held to be invaluable.

"At home in Bucharest, of course, life is less gay. Few governments are more oppressive; few heads of state more power-crazed. The Rumanian security apparatus is said to be second in size only to the KGB. Yet even this bulwark to Communist rule has now been proven vulnerable. Pacepa's defection has reportedly brought down a major purge of the Securitate, protector of the person of Nicolae Ceausescu himself. Who now will guard the tyrant's sleep?"

The Party of the People

Our New York-based Insight Team has submitted the following eyewitness domestic political report:

SOUTHAMPTON, L.I.—The proclivity of Democratic political leaders for air travel has stirred controversy in this quaint seaside community.

On the last weekend in August a large fundraising cocktail party was given for California Governor Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown, Jr., by Democratic Party chieftain Jerry Finkelstein, the wealthy owner of the *New York Law Journal*, the *Civil Service Leader*, and the Manhattan Borough President. Mr. Finkelstein is best known locally for having given much of his fortune and part of his name to further the Manhattan political career of his son, Andrew Stein, who last year acquired the fabulous island's Borough Presidency.

In a hardcover book Tom Wolfe immor-

talized the hospitality of this socially-concerned family: "The first big Radical Chic party, the epochal event, so to speak, was the party that Assemblyman Andrew Stein gave for the grape workers on his father's estate in Southampton on June 29, 1969." Ethel Kennedy was there to represent the lower income tax brackets. Mariachis played, grape workers mingled with guests, and at the party's crescendo *La Causa's* fundraiser "asked everybody to shut their eyes and pretend they were a farm worker's wife in the dusty plains of Delano, California, eating baloney sandwiches for breakfast at 3 a.m. before heading out into the fields...."

The 1978 Brown fundraiser descended from these heights, yet stimulated a small drama of its own.

Flaunting a local ordinance well known to Mr. Finkelstein from previous violations, Governor Brown arrived at the lawn party by helicopter. The Southampton

police sprang into action. But the arriving officer was perplexed as to whom he should hand the summons. Various he tried Helen Reddy's husband and the publisher of the *New York Law Journal* himself, but they demurred. Would Governor Brown be ticketed? Finally the helicopter pilot was stuck with the thing.

Next New York Governor Hugh Carey, who had a fundraising party the same day a few miles down the shore in Easthampton, revived the controversy by asserting that he, as the state's chief executive, had the right to fly his helicopter to the home of his close personal friend, Mrs. Anne Ford Uzielli. A Southampton woman has written a frank letter to the editor of a local paper trenchantly arguing that high office does not put anyone above Hamptons Law. Have the Democrats, who in 1896 absorbed the franchise of the ludicrous Populist Party, lost touch with their roots among The People? □

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 4)

until the Warsaw saloons opened.

From Poland the boys went to Teheran where Jimmy attended the Shah's New Year's Eve party, took aboard two glasses of wine, and turned weepy. In India he astonished government officials by growing dyspeptic when they temporarily demurred from taking him and his photographers to an impoverished village. During a state dinner he and only he was harassed by a common housefly, thus necessitating the professional services of Prime Minister Desai's official Hindu fly swattist. And during the meal he whispered contemptuous remarks about Desai while facing a mysterious electronic device that, upon further inspection, turned out to be a microphone. Alas, the infernal contraption was full of juice, and the Wonderboy's discourtesies were broadcast all over the dining room. In Paris he enlivened a critically important national election by embracing a radical party leader and notifying him of their shared *metaphysique*. The Paris stock market tumbled 2.5 percent and the astounded leader of France's center-right government began to sweat.

By the time the Wonderboy had returned home the whole world had grown interested in the political science of our populist genius. In foreign chancelleries everywhere diplomats would crowd before their teletypes eager for every fresh report from Washington. Not since the Marshall Plan had Washington attracted such avid curiosity from abroad. Even in remote Bangladesh there must have resided a lowly peasant who, after plodding through furrows, his face impassively set toward the undulating hindquarters of a mortgaged bovine, would rush home to inquire:

"What's the latest with the Washington yokel, eh?" Such an inquiry would rarely leave him unconsoled.

There was the time during Middle East negotiations when he threw the Arab world into an instantaneous tumult by doltishly misstating his government's policy *vis-à-vis* Jerusalem, which he referred to as the capital of Israel. There was the time he greeted the President of Rumania with the wrong national anthem, and there was his curious appearance at an economic summit in England during the spring of 1977. Practically every economy in the West was having difficulty and what was it that most concerned Jimmy? That the poet Dylan Thomas had yet to be commemorated in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner. The matter absorbed him.

The leaders of all the other countries were addressing themselves to such worries as inflation and unemployment, but not the Wonderboy. Instead he went off and sought out the Abbey's archdeacon, informing him of his desire to "personally recommend" the Welsh rummy for the Poets' Corner. The move was met by an embarrassed silence, and, as Prime Minister Callaghan tried to engage the attention of the leader of the free world in the problem of his balance of payments, Jimmy hit upon a new approach. He promised the archdeacon to "pray for his soul if you'll memorialize him." Still no luck, and as the summit went on, Jimmy announced his intention to take his crusade to the South Wales fishing village where Mr. Thomas is interred. Only Mr. Callaghan's exasperated warnings that the President's arrival there might ignite demonstrations among Welsh nationalists dissuaded our President.

Doubtless everyone has their own treasured memory of a Carter botch. My own favorite was a flag-raising ceremony in Spokane, Washington. There, the smartest

young man ever to be raised in Plains, Georgia, could not find the American flag, though there was not a drunk in the crowd who shared his difficulty. Sternly he stood, hand on heart, staring stonily into the faces of a thousand Spokane as they gazed upon Old Glory rising majestically behind him. Did our President take the hint and amiably turn around? Not at all. The lone populist stared resolutely forward, and it was not until a local pol gently remonstrated with him that he gave up his hilarious pose. It must have been an unusually quiet flight back to Washington, and my guess is that no sooner had Jimmy returned to the White House than he had Ham Jordan on the telephone hollering at the aforementioned Spokane pol and threatening him with every sort of horror.

Ham was the Wonderboy's chief assistant president, and as the late Niccolo Machiavelli was wont to admonish: First impressions of a ruler and of his intelligence are gained from seeing the men he has around him. Ham was never far, and he was almost always a slob in trouble, yet Jimmy stood by him. He stood by him with such doltish devotion that old Niccolo would not have scratched his noodle for long before delivering up a judgment on the political wizard of campaign '76.

Ham's problems were always of an arrestingly ribald nature. There was the time he was caught *flagrante delicto* with his paw on the *pectoralis major* of Mrs. Amal Ghorbal, lawful wedded wife of the Ambassador from the sovereign state of Egypt. During this crisis the White House pothered indignantly and indecisively, at first issuing denials and then piously requesting to see the smoking gun, so to speak. The Wonderboy handled Ham's next adventure more presidentially. When the news appeared in the *Washington Post*

that Ham had tried to charm a local beauty in Sarsfield's saloon by spitting Amaretto and cream down her bosom, the White House responded with a 33-page white paper. For once the kabosh had been firmly placed on the merchants of scandal. This document, possibly the most important paper of the entire Carter administration, has practically every ingredient of the Carter genius. It is thorough, solemn, shifty, inane, ludicrous.

Fashioned by White House lawyers, the 8,000-word, tightly-reasoned brief takes us right to the scene of the atrocity, querying Sarsfield's surprisingly eloquent mixologist Mr. Daniel V. Marshall III. From Mr. Marshall's testimony alone it becomes clear for all who would see that poor Ham was the victim of his own gallantry. Apparently he was unwinding after a day of statecraft. Quietly quaffing his interesting drink in an inconspicuous stall, our President's likable factotum would occasionally jollify the saloon's ambience with a genial belch but nothing more. Suddenly a bevy of cuties fell upon him. As Mr. Marshall recreated the scene: "Girls were coming up to Hamilton and woo-woo. You know what I mean?" Naturally Ham shrank back in disgust, and "did something to the point where enough's enough. I think one of the girls got insulted." Yet there was no spitting: "that would have been quite a mess, and she certainly wasn't wet." There you have it.

Ham was only the most newsworthy of the Wonderboy's aides. There were others: press secretary Jody Powell who had been ejected from the Air Force Academy for transgressing that institution's honor code, presidential drug advisor Dr. Peter Bourne, forced to resign when caught issuing bogus prescriptions for controlled drugs, and so forth. Two years into the Carter administration it became apparent that America was being governed by a concatenation of jokes. The horselaugh had replaced our national anthem. Dogberries were on sale in vending machines in the White House and in souvenir shops all over Washington. The economy was in ominous condition. Jimmy's legislative proposals were irrelevant. The Congress was more mutinous than ever, and Jimmy's foreign policy continued to astound the world. It combined abusive denunciations of the Soviets with unilateral disarmament. Steadily a pervasive sense of unease began to spread. Republicans and Democrats restrained their laughter and even their criticisms as they saw the Wonderboy grow in puniness with every day. Western security no longer seemed dependent on American power but on the "bonkers factor," to wit: the perception that America was governed by a real nut and that there was no telling what he might do when aroused. The Soviets were edgy, NATO leaders were still edgier.

August of 1978 will be remembered by historians as the catastasis of the Wonderboy's Populist Era. It was then that the White House yokels and their antagonists began asking fundamental questions about political conditions. The yokels began their reassessment right after poor Ham was assaulted while at a Georgetown *soirée* by an unidentified guest wielding a chocolate mousse, that expensive French dessert that had just become all the rage with the Georgia mafia. Upon being introduced to the delicacy sometime earlier in the year the boys grew to love it, and no longer were they so distressed when Georgetown hostesses refused to serve them Moon Pies and Dr. Pepper. Yet when Ham got walloped, and the boys saw what the Gallic potion could do to a double-knit leisure suit, a chill went through the White House. The boys began to wonder if life in Washington was really worth it. Henceforth Georgetown was looked upon with fear, and it was a rare Carter aide who would go near a chocolate mousse. As one unidentified aide remarked, "Ah'd sooner kiss a



pig thun tech one of them things." Morale within the White House was at its nadir, and many of the boys began to yearn for the reassuring sounds of home sweet home: of gentle cows lowing in the front yard, of horseflies struggling to free themselves from fly-paper strips, of granddaddy hitting the spittoon from a dozen paces.

The questions from outside the White House grew more serious too. August 5, 1978, was the date from which a deeper, more pessimistic questioning of the Carter administration began. On that day Senator Barry Goldwater uttered the heretofore unutterable. Speaking in Chattanooga, Tennessee, he stated his belief that the Wonderboy was, indeed, an idiot. It was a decidedly reckless statement, for anyone with any knowledge at all knows that an idiot is a mentally defective person with an intelligence quotient of less than 25. President Carter had graduated from the Naval Academy, he was a former governor of the largest state east of the Mississippi River, and he was the devoted husband of Rosalynn Carter, known and revered throughout Washington as "the steel magnolia." Jimmy was *not* an idiot, yet Goldwater's declaration did set minds to musing. If not an idiot, what about an imbecile? Perhaps a moron?

After two years as President of the United States Jimmy still speaks glowingly of eliminating the three martini lunch (known as the fifty-dollar martini lunch during campaign '76), filthy or deceitful language in public life, and strong spirits at White House dinners. What is more, as he informed North Carolina tobacco growers on two occasions in the summer of 1978, his administration is dedicated to making "the smoking of tobacco even more safe." Are these the policies of an idiot? Not at all, these are policies that demand vigorous staff work, and every day the achievement of the Carter staff becomes ever more manifest. Ham, Jody, and Dr. Bourne were only three of the Wonderboy's appointees. There were others. There was Jerry Rafshoon, the Rev. Andrew Young, Cousin Hugh Carter, Bert Lance, and Miss Midge Costanza, the spunky Rochester, New York, intellectual who gained such distinction for sending Mr. Carter memos suggesting such large thoughts as that White House staff members be required to make visits to the Lincoln or Jefferson Memorials.

This last idea came to her after she had sought to "reenergize" herself during her own visitation to the Jefferson Memorial at 4 a.m. According to the *Washington Post*, Miss Costanza, whose special responsibility for minorities had earned her the unspoken title of White House Minister to the Kooks, remarked: "every time I came across 'man' or 'men' I changed it mentally. I said, 'IT WAS PERSON, TOM, IT WAS PERSON! OKAY TOM. ISN'T IT IRONIC THAT IT TOOK A WOMAN TO BE REENERGIZED RIGHT HERE?'" More ironic still is the fact that but a few short weeks after this reenergizing orgy Miss Costanza resigned. Perhaps she left to write a monograph on Jefferson; as she herself had observed: "He was so brilliant. And yet he wasn't fully informed." Being "informed" was an obsession with Jimmy and his staff. Never before had such a group inhabited our federal government—and Senator Goldwater called Jimmy an idiot!

I deny that Jimmy Carter is an idiot or any other variety of mental defective. Rather he is the perfect representative of New Age Egalitarianism. His politics reveal the vagaries of a really cheap mind. He has no ideas and no ideals worthy of scrutiny. His vision is that of a small-town boomer dreaming of a paved road for Main Street. His philosophy is a stew of jealousy, superstition, and banality. He is without dignity. If ever he were to be impeached, my guess is that after a review of his policies and locutions he would be acquitted by reason of inanity. Yet Mr. Carter is the only President we have, and it is the duty of all Americans to close ranks behind him, or, better still, in front of him, and not let the world see what 27.5 percent of the adult population of this country did to us. □

The Chicago Reader

Some very thoughtful and salutary ruminations on the *metaphysique* of nosiness from Dr. John Milward, the noted Chicago intellectual:

Feminists might balk at my orientation toward nationally known artists, arguing that women recording and performing on a regional level can more effectively document their own world view. But this argument seems at worst to be reactionary, and at best to simply ignore the cultural power of pop music. The music business may have indeed placed women artists in designated roles, but by consistently chipping away at those roles in the public marketplace, our most vital female performers are finally breaking down the sexist assumptions upon which articles like this are based. If one believes that feminism is the most potent cultural movement of the past decade, then pop music can be seen as an artistic barometer of the social change. In this context, Patti Smith's rape and pillage of stereotyped male roles and Fleetwood Mac's tempered sexual democracy become as significant as the next ERA vote.

[August 11, 1978]

State Press

A thrilling report on progress in the heuristic arts at Arizona State University, to whose venerable campus newspaper, *State Press*, all mankind is indebted:

More than 300 ASU students spend their Thursday nights pretending they're blind, speechless or members of the opposite sex.

They're students in Nonverbal Communications 330, taught by Dr. Loretta Malandro and assisted by 40 teaching assistants....

Malandro's program encourages students to gain a sense of self-awareness, Kent Rini, a graduate assistant for the class, said....

On the blind evening, the students are blindfolded before seeing each other and taken to one of the graduate assistant's apartments to spend five sightless hours, Malandro said.

They spend these hours preparing and eating dinner, and participating in a number of touching exercises in which they feel the hands of the other group members to determine the emotions of the person....

At the end of the evening, the students' blindfolds are removed and they see each other for the first time.

"I thought everyone would be a lot better looking than they actually turned out to be," Daniel Crowe, a junior communications major, said. "The room also seemed a lot larger when I was blindfolded...."

As part of the sex-reversal evening, students must dress as a member of the opposite sex, Kent said. The men are taken to the supermarket and afterwards must prepare dinner.

The students also participate in a number of smaller group projects.

In one of these projects, known as Mirror-Mirror, students are required to evaluate parts of their bodies and get an evaluation from another person, Malandro said.

"The purpose of the entire class is to coordinate the student's left brain with their right brain," she said. "The left brain performs the analytic functions and the right controls a person's feelings and emotions."

Nonverbal communication is the only class that combines both of these functions, Rini said.

Presently, ASU is the only school in the

United States that teaches nonverbal communication by using experimental settings as opposed to the traditional classroom, Malandro said.

[April 5, 1978]

The Nation

Cool ratiocinations of another freedom-loving liberal, writing to warn us of the repressive uses of libel law—and we all know how often the left is harassed by libel suits nowadays:

...I would argue what may seem to be a startling proposition. Liberals and radicals should be protected by libel principles in situations where conservatives would not be. Something like this has occurred in recent times (quite belatedly), and we all are grateful that not only Elmer Gertz but John Henry Faulk and Quentin Reynolds were treated as "deserving" plaintiffs. The law should not always be equal or "neutral." As Ronald Dworkin has cogently argued in the Bakke situation, inequality to enhance human dignity is permissible. The Burger Court has (at least theoretically) endorsed the Warren Court's role as sentinel to protect the rights of powerless minorities against majority abridgment. In libel cases, if not in libel law, liberals have often been in a disadvantaged position and radicals invariably so.

[May 20, 1978]

Chicago Sun-Times

Another powerful lucubration from the lovely and eloquent Betty Friedan, chief theoretician for the women of the fevered brow:

Women are seduced into taking tranquilizers and sleeping pills to relieve their tensions. Those pills don't cure the real malaise, which is feeling unequal, that leads to depression and anxiety. If anything shows us that we desperately need an Equal Rights Amendment, it is this epidemic of women's reliance on drugs.

[May 11, 1978]

Psychology Today

The biography of another American giant presented to the credulous readers of *Psychology Today* for their amazement and for *Psychology Today's* profit. America continues to unfold miracles:

Jerry Green is typical of a generation that needs to reconcile its political passions and material wants. In the 60s, the 34-year-old, bespectacled lawyer studied legal-aid systems, took on public-interest cases, and was occasionally tear-gassed in street demonstrations. He made the transition into the 70s with courses in Rolfing and massage. This helped him to realign both his physique and his political opinions.

Green no longer believes capitalism is responsible for the evils of war and poverty. Rather he believes these problems, such as medical malpractice suits, are a result of mismanaged human relationships. To do his bit for efficiency, as well as his pocketbook, Green wants to help doctors and patients untangle their disagreements by preparing contracts for them that will spell out their mutual responsibilities. Before he can plumb the commercial potential of this scheme, however, he must hurdle one obstacle: money.

[August 1978]

Rolling Stone

An editorial writer at the renowned *Rolling Stone* lays down a line of reasoning guaranteed to test the attention span of the most assiduous Talmudic scholar, a world chess champion, or even the genius now resident at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue:

Once again, the Supreme Court, that patently offensive gang of arthritic perverts, has condemned all Americans to years of gutter hypocrisy for the original sin of acting like human beings. Last month the court ruled that the Federal Communications Commission was correct in its threat to silence New York radio station WBAI-FM after it broadcast George Carlin's recording, "Filthy Words"....

Rolling Stone agrees that government has an obligation to protect children in truly harmful situations where the little f---ers lack the strength, wisdom or guidance to protect themselves. But who is going to protect children from a Supreme Court that teaches them to be ashamed of their natural bodies and their natural language? Who is going to protect them from a Supreme Court that stunts their growth by legally sanctioning radio and TV censorship and a programmed picture of adults as people who talk and act like children except when they smoke, get drunk or beat up each other? Who is going to protect them from a Supreme Court that says it's moral and virtuous to act one way in private and lie up the a-- about it in public or the media? And who is going to protect us all from a Supreme Court that in recent years has intruded more and more into the privacy of the home, telling us what we as adults can read, watch and hear?

[September 7, 1978]

New York Daily News

The inexorable grind of one formidable cerebrum, namely: the topmost organ of Pete Hamill, excited this time by fiscal horror:

And Carter must know that he has made a mess of everything. The worst mess of all is an economy that permits the 70-cent ice cream cone....

What happened? Three wars happened. The military-industrial complex, as President Eisenhower called it, grabbed off a major hunk of American life. Carter doesn't have to look very far to discover the causes of inflation; all he has to do is look across town at the Pentagon. These people are eating \$130 billion a year out of the American economy. They build three nuclear bombs a day, to add to our stockpile of 30,000 such bombs (enough to destroy every Soviet city 30 times). In the city of Washington, they spend \$1.24 million on mansions for generals and admirals. They spend \$48.4 million a year for our 143 military bands around the world. And those are just small items.

[August 2, 1978]

The Progressive

The *Progressive* speculates on a shocking possibility:

To speculate on the motives of the men in the Kremlin is always hazardous, but a line of conjecture suggests itself: It is plausible to suppose that the Soviets have concluded that they have nothing to gain at this point from a SALT II agreement—that a new treaty, under the terms on which Washington is insisting, would in fact work to the military advantage of the United States, and to the detriment of Soviet security.

[September 1978]

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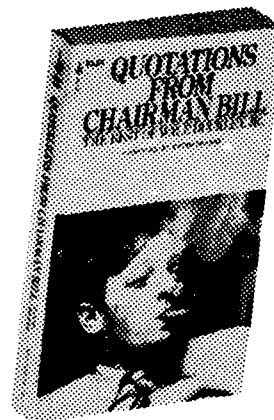
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LOS ANGELES	\$476	\$358	\$197
SANTA FE	\$412	\$311	\$172
WINNETKA, ILL. (suburb of Chicago)	\$372	\$280	\$154

*Insurance premiums are based on many factors, including your age, the kind of car you own and where you live. Rates vary from company to company. The figures above do not include liability coverage.

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